HRAMAN MAHAVIR

8 B

MUNI NATHMAL

SHRAMAN MAHAVIR

On the auspicious occasion of
Acharya Sri Kalu's 1st Birth Centenary

Religion
- Buddhism
- Idealogy.

294.4
NAT

294.4
N198 Δ

Translated by

SRI DINESHCHANDRA SHARMA

0318

Published by

MITRA PARISHAD

115A, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-7
Gram : MITPARISAD Phone : 34-9044, 34-0442

SHRAMAN MAHAVIR

MUNI NATHMAL

Price : Rs. 18/- 1st Edition 21st October, 1976

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Ramakrishna Paramhansa was blessed with a disciple like Swami Vivekanand. In this age of rationality and reason, Jainacharya Tulsi is fortunate enough to have a humble disciple of the brilliance of Muni Nathmal. Hanuman profoundly revered Rama. Swami Vivekanand deeply respected Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Similar 'Gurubhakti' is found in Muni Nathmal. An erudite scholar in several languages, a thinker with lucid mind, a lively writer, an imaginative poet and philosopher—that is how one can describe Muni Nathmal. Not only the Jainas, but the whole of the intellectual world is impressed by his literary works. 2500 years have passed since Lord Mahavir was born. The world of today is in greater need of his ideology. 'Shraman Mahavir' is a renowned treatise of Muni Nathmal in Hindi. Mitra Parishad of Calcutta has published its English translation with the hope that it would help those who do not know Hindi to comprehend the subtilties of Mahavir's thoughts. Lastly, we are very greateful to Sri T. M. P. Mahadevan for his forward & to Sri Dinesh Chandra Sharma for the translation of the original book.

115-A, Chittaranjan Avenue,
Calcutta-7.

Kanhaiyalal Fulfagar,
Secretary, Publication Department.

FOREWORD

As philosophy and as religion, Jainism has carved for itself a unique place in Indian Culture. Its contribution to epistomology, metaphysics, and practical ethics is distinctive and important. While its basic stand is non-absolutistic, it recognizes the possibility of integration of standpoints, accepts permeance in the midst of change, accomodates both identity and plurality and promises the state of perfection to all. Though it denies God as an omniscient being, omniscience as such is not denied. The perfected souls are all omniscient beings; they serve as the models for other souls that are struggling to gain the supreme end. Jainism thus admits Godhead that is exemplified in each and every perfected soul. Thus, there is not one God but many Gods who are exemplars of perfection, who, having been imperfect humans, have achieved the highest state of isolation through persistent effort. The Kingdom of Gods receives a new member with every soul that is released.

The name of the greatest teacher associated with this school is Vardhamana Mahavira. Vardhamana, however, was not the founder of Jainism. The Jaina tradition belives that Vardhamana was the last in the line of twenty-four teachers known as Tirthankaras or ford-makers. They serve as the ferrymen across the river of transmigration. They are the saviours of souls, the perfected ones who lead the way to redemption. Mahavira introduced some measure of reform in the teachings of his predecessor, Parsvanatha, to suit the exigencies of the changed times. Parsvanatha seems to have recognised only four vows; Vardhamana added the vow of chastity as the fifth. For the ascetics, Parsvanatha had allowed the use of clothing consisting of an under and an upper garment; Vardhamana forbade clothing. Some of Mahavira's followers adopted his reforms completely; they came to be known as Digmbaras (sky-clad); others accepted the fifth vow, but continued to wear white clothes and are designated as Swetambaras (white-clad).

One of the chief disciples of Acharya Sri Tulsi, Muni Nathmal, in his book *Shraman Mahavir,* has given an authentic account of the biography of Lord Vardhamana Mahavira. This book is an outcome of a long, continueous and devoted piece of research in the Jain scriptures and other sacred works. The impartial and unbiased evaluation of the two traditions of Swetambara and Digambara and the clear presentation of the facts in an interesting manner are noteworthy. I am sure that the students of Indian philosophy would definitely gain greatly by reading this book. I wish every Indian, young and old, reads this biography of Lord Mahavira and understands the life and teachings of the great Tirthankara and derives lasting benefit therefrom.

Madras, **Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan**
September 29, 1976.

Preface

To live is natural. To evolve one's career is an art, to record it in a biography is a greater art and to chronicle an illustrious being's biography is the greatest art. My pen ventures to perform the greatest art. It is like an odyssey fraught with untoward happenings, along dense jungles and high pinnacles. What an ordeal I have chosen for myself! But have not frail frames shouldered mighty tasks at times? I will succeed in my task : This was my resolve when I launched upon the enterprise and now when I see its conclusion my expectations appear to have been fulfilled. The three hurdles in writing a biography of Lord Mahavira were :—

(1) Researching into authentic biographical sources.
(2) Reconciling the twin traditions of Swetambara and Digambara.
(3) An unbiased evaluation.

Digambara tradition has not preserved the biographical material pertaining to Lord Mahavira. Swetambara tradition has cared to preserve it better but it is far from adequate. The three most authentic sources of biographical information on Lord Mahavira are :—

(1) 'Ayaro' chapter 9
(2) 'Ayarchula' chapter 15
(3) 'Kalpasutra'

'Bhagawatisutra' also affords ample biographical information. 'Uvasagadasao', 'Nayadhammakaha' and 'Suyagado' etc. are other scriptures that abound in information regarding the Lord's life and philosophy.

In later literature, 'Acharanga Churni', 'Avashyak Churni', 'Uttarpuraha, Trishasthishalakpurushacharitra', 'Chaupanna' 'Mahapurusha chariya' are some of the works that depict his life.

Buddhistic literature also reveals Lord Mahavira's life. Though here the approach is more critical yet a perspective inclusive of the laudation in Jain literature and criticism in

Buddhistic literature rightly projects a more rational image of the Lord.

I culled out biographical details from these works. At times I have given a free rein to my poetic fancy in elaborating and depicting the Lord's biography. The triad of ailment, age and death is the main source of inspiration to renunciation. It is believed that these dismal destinies of man inspired Buddha to renounce householdership. However, on scanning the plethora of classics I am prone to believe that the legend is more poetic than factual. And still it must be asserted as a a perennial truth, howsoever its factuality be a matter of historical research. More often than not, a poet or an author presents truth as a factum. Life does flow entwined with truth. A representation of truth in the garb of a factum is, therefore, permissible.

What led Lord Mahavira renounce the world and seek initiation can be better answered by representing truth as a factum. This is what the present author has sought to do. The Lord aimed at emancipation. How can one's aim be otherwise when one's spiritual course reflects bothing but emancipation ?

Jainism classifies the enlightened beings into three categories :—

(1) *Swayam Sambuddha*
(Self-enlightened) who attain enlightenment by themselves.

(2) *Pratyeka Buddha*
(In whom the process of enlightenment is triggered by any one specific event.)

(3) *Upadesha Buddha*
Enlightend by instruction.
(Tirthankaras)

Tirthankaras are self-enlightened beings. Lord Mahavira was such a self-enlightened being. Enlightenment dawned upon him without any phenomenal cause This enlightnement generated his cosmology and his philosophic system. It led to shape his concept of deliverance. The means was again emancipation, internal and external. In this context he found every political system a bondage and chose for himself a career free from such bondages.

Jain scriptures are aphoristic in style. The ninth Chapter of 'Ayaro' (Acharyas or Masters) reveals Lord Mahavira's spiritual career systematically. However, its terse style renders the work incomprehensible. In the commentary of 'Ayaro' the commentator has to some extent elucidated the allusions and references but the elucidation is far from satisfactory in crystallising the particular events. I have elaborated the events on the basis of the available clues. Some unknown facets of the Lord's life have emerged from this endeavour and a number of aspects of his spiritual accomplishment have been discovered.

In Buddhistic scriptures abundant biographical events of Lord Buddha are entwined with his preachings. It renders Buddhistic instructions lucid as well as interestings. The preachings of Lord Mahavira rarely occur with Illustrative events. It results in the style being epigrammatic and tedious. This awareness has led me to summon suitable events and to ensconse these into corresponding instructions. It ought not to be taken as a flight of fancy. I have sought to sieve the indications veiled in the Lord's preachings through my contemplative faculty and then present these in the present work. The hero's deeds lend a biography its theme. Inaction can never do so. It is a common belief that Lord Mahavira was a propounder and a practiser of inaction. It is one perspective of truth. The other angle of vision is that Lord Mahavira stood for elevation, endeavour, enterprise and herculean effort. He never endorsed inertness. His endeavour was divorced from statecraft. Hence the chapter of his career related to regality is brief. His concern was with the inner realms of mind. This chapter of his life has been abundantly enlarged and has in its turn enriched the biographical theme. The twelve year period of his life saw unprecedented experiments in fearlessness and empathy. He wandered alone.

He visited strangers. No trace of fear was there, nor that of ill-will. There existed an unchallenged preponderance of equanimity. After attaining liberation, the Lord propounded relativistic logic. This is how he worded it : Truth is free in itself. When it comes to epistemogical indirect experience and semantics the truth and its opposite combine variously to offer converses and corollaries. This stance led the Lord to pronounce that all possible statements are true if they are relative. Conversely, all statements are false if they are absolute. He silenced numerous speculative and practical enigmas by means of this principle of relativity.

The biographical facets of the Lord are so vivid and fascinating that no imagery or colouring is needed. In my assay I have abstained from resorting to a painter's art in all forms. My pen has simply unveiled the images that had been thickly shrouded by the lapse of time.

The age of mythology followed the departure of the Lord from his earthly abode. In this era marvels and miracles were woven with the biographical yarn of the Lord. His asceticism and stoicism were also hyperbolised. Celestial occurrences are often repeated. I have rationalised and humanised these miracles. It has far from lessened the significance of his life. Rather it has enhanced the glory and refulgence of his achievement.

Acharya Shri Tulsi desired me to celebrate the twenty-fifth centenary of the Lord's *nirvana* with a novel attempt at biography. My aim was to pay thus my humble tribute to the Lord. It was so aimed and the endeavour has been crowned with success.

The inspiration and blessings of Acharya Shri granted me light and strength and I attained my goal.

Muni Dulhe Raj ji has kindly edited the copy and prepared the annexures and thus helped me immensely. Muni Manilalji has also helped in correcting the copy. I must express my gratitude to them.

—Muni Nathmal.

Contents

1. Preface A–D
2. The Lord's Biography 1–17
   - The Dream 2
   - The Birth 3
   - Naming the Child 5
   - The Sport around Amla tree 5
   - Schooling 6
   - Sanmati 7
   - The Religious tradition 8
   - The Political *milieu* 8
   - The Family 9
   - The Marriage 9
   - The Inner conflict for Liberation 11
   - The Self-embraced Yogic Death of the Parents 13
   - Interview with Uncle 15
3. The Campaign for Emancipation 18–22
   - The Freedom from Body-consciousness 21
3. The Resolve to be Free 23–26
4. The Flame of Valour 27–30
5. Non-Acquisition *VIS-A-VIS* Fearlessness 31–34
6. The Gloom of Fear : The Light of Fearlessness 35–40
7. Amongst the Primitives 41–48
8. Am I not a Mighty Emperor 49–51
9. The Protective Shield of Meditation 52–60
   - The Conquest of Sleep 52
   - The Conquest of Hunger 57
   - The Conquest of Palate 59
10. Meditation, Yogic Postures And Silence 61–66
11. In The Lap of Conducive Discomforts 67–69
12. The Image And The Reflection 70–73
13. The Signs of Progress 74–76
14. The Tireless Fountain of Compassion 77–78

15. A Boating Spree In the Ganges 79–80

16. The Liberation From Bondage : 81–85

- The Obligations of Liberation 81
- The Science of Discrimination 82
- *Tanmurtiyoga* 84
- Realisation of The Purushakar of Anthropomorphic Self 85

17. Worshipped Here : Arrested There 86–92

18. Emancipation of The Females 93–104

19. Enlightenment the *Summum bonum* 105–106

20. The *Tirtha* (Moral Order) And The *Tirthankar* 107–116

21. The Perennial Stream Of Wisdom 117–118

22. The Religious Order And Its System 119–127

- The Schedule 121
- Meals and Movement *(Vihar)* 122
- The Begging bowl 122
- Protocols *Interse* 123
- Collective Values 124
- Service 126

23. Spiritual Pursuit Outside The Order 128–133

24. A Retrospection 134–140

25. The Contemporary Religions And Religious Leaders 141–143

26. New Ideologies : New Traditions 144–188

- The Clarion-Call of Revolution 149
- Casteism 150
- Monastic norms 157
- Sprituality and Religion 159
- *Dharma & Wam-marg* 164
- The Orientation of the Spiritual Regimen 164
- The Language of the People for the people 169
- The Principle of Love and Vegetarianism 170
- Sacrificial Rites : Endorsement or Modification 172

War and Non-invasion 175
The Clarion-call of Non-acquisition 182
28. A Horde of Paradoxes 189–192
29. Co-Existence And Relativity 193–204
30. Everwakefulness 205–214
31. The Gift of Sight 215–218
32. The Three Dimensions Of Equanimity 219–229
The Faculty of Fellow-Feeling 221
On The Plane of Fearlessness 223
The Plane Of Tolerance 228
33. A Mind Emancipated 230–238
34. A Move For Reconciliation 239–242
35. The Common Welfare 243–249
36. Conversion 250–254
37. Realistic Personality Veiled In Exaggerations 255–258
38. The Uncommon And The Common 259–260
39. Omniscience—Its Two Aspects 261–264
40. Mahavira In Buddhistic Literature 265–267
41. The Visible Tendencies Through the Invisible Guage 268–273
42. The Probing Eye : Divining the Invisible 274–276
43. The Co-travellers and the Odyssey 277–290
44. The Schism In The Order 291–294
45. The Thunderbolt Of Violence Against Non-Violence 295–302
46. Nirwana (Deliverance) 303–305
47. The Tradition 306–308
48. A Bird's Eye-View Of The Lord's Life 309–317
The Fountain of Dynamism 309
A considered And Judicious Acceptance of Monkhood 309
Asceticism and Meditation 310
Silence 310
Sleep 310
Food 311

Dissolution of Bodily Attachment 312
Stoicism 313
Equanimity and Compassion 314
Spiritualism 314
The Basic Tenets of *Dharma* 315
The *Nirwana* of the Lord 317
49. The Hymn 318–324

Annexure

1. The Difference of Traditions 325
2. The Four-month-Long annual rainy camps 326
3. Other sojourns 327–333

I

The Lord's Biography : Some Images and Sketches

Kumar Shramana Keshi was the disciple of Lord Parsvanath and Shramana Gautam of Lord Mahavira. Lord Mahavira had just come into his own. The holy wheel of Dharma established by him had just begun to revolve. The sun had still not cast its beams far. Keshi felt that the dark was all the more intensifying. The sun in the monastic tradition was yet to rise to convert this gloom into light. As soon as he met Gautam he confided to him his anxiety. With anguish he said :—

'The masses are weltering in the encircling gloom. Who shall lend them light ?'

Said Gautam—'Sir, the sun that will flood the earth with light has already risen. He will lead the masses from darkness to light.'

The response consoled Keshi a little. Astonished he queried, 'Who could that sun be ?'

'Lord Mahavira is that sun,'

'And who, prithee, happens to be this Lord Mahavira ?'

'The one who initially was the prince of the kingdom of Videh and who is today the great exponent of freedom from body—consciousness, the verily enlightened, the propounder of the principle of perennial creation, and the truly venerable.[1]

---

[1] 'Uttarajjhayanam' 23/75-78.

Keshi was not satisfied with the laconic reply. Gautam, then, shared a few biographical occurences of Lord Mahavira with Keshi.

The Dream :

Clear blue sky. Tranquil atmosphere. The small hours of the night. The locale is king Siddhartha's royal place. It is the centre of the royal sleeping chamber. An aroma of fragrant incenses pervades the air. Lavish soft bed. In her slumber queen Trishala dreams a chain of events.[1]

She saw—

An elephant, fair as a rain-depleted cloud, bright as a pearl necklace, white as an ocean of milk, moon, bright transparent like a drop of water, white as a silvery mountain. It has two pairs of tusks, with a mighty and high build.

A bull, broad-shouldered and fair as petals of a white lotus.

A lion with lightning-bright eyes sparkling as burnished gold. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth seated on a lotus, the legendary elephants, Divine Keepers of ten directions spraying her with their trunks.

A garland made from the fresh flowers of Mandar, blooming in all the seasons, a few colured flowers streaking the white ones.

Moon, immaculately white as the bubbling spray of cow-milk or a silvery vase. It was glittering as the ocean spray or polished looking-glass bewitching in its charm, tranquil and serene.

Sun—The destroyer of darkness, emitting fiery brightness, red as red Ashok, Kinshuk, Shukmukh and the fruit of Gunja.

A banner held aloft upon a golden staff, the upper half imprinted with a leonine figure and waving gracefully in the breeze.

A metal vase full of water, surrounded with lotus motifs.

---

[1] 'Kalpasutra Sutra 33-47.

A pair of fish, transluscent, fascinating in delicacy and agility.

A lotus-pond full of lotuses blooming with the rays of sun and others with those of moon and other rare varieties of lotuses. The fragrance of lotuses responding to solar rays enlivened the air.

A throne large in size, bejewelled, depicting the head of a lion, symbolical of valour. Milky ocean agitated with dancing wavelets, each oscillation of breeze throwing it into motion and still leaving it profound in its vastness.

A celestial plane refulgent as morning sun, aromatic with incense of agar and loban.

A plane of serpentine demi-gods, a symbol of prosperity, delicate in outline and surprassingly beautiful.

A collation of gems whose pure and serene rays touched the horizons, brilliantly sublime.

A torch bearing a sky-high fiery flame but without smoke and fed with butter.

Trishala woke up, She was elated. Her dreams filled her with wonder. She had hitherto never had such dreams. She went to King Siddhartha and narrated her sleepy experiences. The King was as much wonderstruck.

King Siddhartha sent for the soothsayers who could interpret dreams. They devoted themselves to a study of the dreams and said, "Sire, Her Highness will be blessed with a noble son. The dreams augur the vast spiritual realm the child shall command."

The King suitably rewarded the soothsayers before bidding them farewel.[1]

The Birth :

The air is serene and bright. The spring breeze is blowing. The bowers blooming with flowers declaim the spring season. The lakes are jubilant. Land and sky are bathed in effervescence. The country rejoices and the fields are abounding in grain. A child is born in such an atmosphere on the thirteenth day of moon of *Chaitra,* the first month of the Indian calender (March 30, 599 B.C.)

---

[1] 'Kalpasutra' Sutra 64-78.

The Kingdom is Videh, the town Kshatriyakund. Siddhartha is the fortunate father and Trishala the mother. The infant is yet to be named. Slavery obtained during those days. The maid Priyamvada conveyed the happy news to king Siddhartha. The father was beside himself with ecastasy. He amply rewarded Priyamvada and released her from her life-long vassalage. It might be counted as the pioneer campaign of the child to uproot slavery.

Siddhartha called the officer guarding the town and said, "Favoured being ! I am blessed with a son! Arrange for festivities."

The officer proceeded to comply with the command.

The jails were being emptied. The captives were being restored to their families as if the harbinger of emancipation chose to explode as a maiden venture the dungeons of human captives rather than those of evils.

The market places were thronged with human beings. Commodities like cereals, grocery articles, butter and oil were being sold at a throwaway price as if the admirer of non-acquisition had thrown gauntlets to acquisition. Highways trijunctions, crossroads of the city were being sprinkled with water as if the repository of peace foretold the millenium of happiness by mitigating the earth's heat. Every turret and spire donned triumphs of his life.

The entire town exhaled fragrance. It presaged that the interpreter of abstinence would be famous far and wide.

The townsmen were curious to know what all this fanfare stood for. Had some mighty event taken place justifying such rejoicing?

The veil of suspense was torn when the thrice happy event was conveyed by the officers of the state. The entire town was aglow with happiness.[1]

Naming the Child :

Time passes on incessantly. Each being is nurtured by each progressive moment. The moving hands of the clock exemplify selfless work by delivering foetus, evolving a new-born into a child, the latter into a youth and thence to age before laying him as a corpse. The wheel of time evolved the child of Trishala. The infant was twelve days old. He is still not named. Each one of us arrives here nameless. The preceding generation names him for the facility of indentification. Human soul is abstract. It eludes identification. The dual means of indentifying it are its looks and name. Looks he inherits from the invisible creation and name is imposed upon him once he emerges into the manifest creation. The royal parents accosted the invitees :

"Since the day this child was conceived, new dimensions have been added to the prosperity of our state. State coffers are swollen with currency, silver and gold, gems and jewellery. The armed forces and the fleet of chariots are waxing. It is in the fitness of things to name him 'Vardhaman'[2]. We presume you would endorse our choice of name."

The guests unaminously commended the choice of the royal couple. The child was called 'Vardhman'. The ceremony was concluded with a loud declamation of applause for King Siddhartha and queen Trishala.

The Sport around Amla tree :

Prince Vardhman was running his eighth year. There are indications of the imminent all round physical progress. His prowess is no more dormant. The undaunted valour of a martial race is evident.

---

[1] 'Kalpasutra', Sutra 96-100; Ibid Commentary pp. 12-13.

[2] Ibid, Sutra 85-86.

He was playing once with his comrades the game called "Amalki." The game is played around an 'Amla+ tree. The young participants ran round the tree. The one who climbed and then unclimbed the tree before others was the champion. The winner would ride over the back of the loser and thus travel upto the remotest point.

Prince Vardhman climbed a *Peepul** tree before all others. A serpent followed him in his wake and clung round the tree trunk. Other juvenile players ran out of scare. Prince Vardhman would not be frightened. He readily got down the tree, caught hold of the snake and threw it aside.[1]

Schooling :

Prince Vardhman was a prodigy. His singular wisdom transcended natural intellect. Extra-sensory-perception was his *forte.* However he never demonstrated these virtues to anybody. He was entering the ninth year of his life. His parents thought it opportune to begin his schooling now. A tutor was engaged to teach him. Vardhman would listen attentively to him.

A Brahmin paid them a visit. He possessed a noble demeanour and an imposing bearing. The royal tutor seated him with great honour. The Brahmin put a few questions to Vardhman—How many modes of letters are there?

How many alternatives do these have?

The young scholar duly answered these questions. The long volley of questions thus put is still extant but the answers offered have been lost. As is the practice, the problems persist while their solutions are thrown into oblivion.

The tutor was astonished to hear the answers. On further probe it emerged that the knowledge imparted to Vardhman had already been known to him. The teacher prevailed upon

---

+Emblic myrobalan.

*The sacred fig.

1 'Awashyakchurni', first part p. 246.

the parents to release the prince from the bondage of studies the very first day.[1]

If we assess the present without making a reference to the past we go no farther than analysing a personality. In so far as we thus obliterate the vital back-drop of antecedents, we fail to evaluate the essential core of existence of the being in question.

When we size the present up excluding the future perspective then we go no farther than his origin and ignore the destiny that awaits a man.

The present has the potential to germinate the seed of the past and sow that of the future. One capable of viewing the two potentialities simultaneously, never breaks up or disintegrates the personality and the enveloping aura of his existence. He does not allow the origin and the destiny to divorce from each other. He views the whole as an integrated whole. Such a comprehensive observer does not explore the seed of an event occurring at the age of eight within those eight years, but scans the earlier period ranging to the very beginning of things. The prodigiousness of prince Vardhman cannot be explained on the basis of his heritage or intellectual calibre. It can be explained in the perspective of the great fermentation hidden in the chain of preceding rein-carnations.

Sanmati :

It was the era of Lord Parshva. Thousands of his disciples had been roaming about the integrated Indian subcontinent and Central Asia. Two of his followers visited the town of Kshatriyakund. The one was Sanjaya and the other Vijaya. They belonged to the class of Charana saints and had the capacity of soaring in the sky. They had their doubts on a metaphysical issue. Their attempts at solving it did not yield results. They came to the royal palace of Siddhartha. There they saw young Vardhman. The very vision solved their doubt. They returned dazed at this phenomenon. On that account they addressed Vardhaman as 'Sanmati".[1]

---

[1] Ibid pp. 248, 249.

A suitable answer settles a doubt. This normally is the process of resolving the doubts. However, at times, a different and unusual system comes into play. Just as the mere closeness of a great non-violent being counteracts the venom of violence of its own accord, converting the severest enmity into fellow-feeling, so the mere proximity of an enlightened soul sets at naught the persistent doubts of a mind.

The Religious tradition :

The twin religious traditions that prevailed in the North-Eastern India, then, were Shramanic and Brahminic traditions. Siddhartha and Trishala were the followers of Shramanic tradition.[2] They treated the followers of Lord Parswa as their preceptors. The religious tradition promoted by Lord Vardhman was a part of his heritage. That he ever sought precepts from a *Shramana* or held conferences with the *Shramanas* is not known. Vast and profound was his learning. He left his home to roam about in search of truth and emancipation. For years he practised spiritualism alone.

The Political milieu :

Vazzi was strong polity during those days. Vaishali was its capital. It was situated in the north of Ganges in Videh. The federation of Vazzi included the rulers of Lichchhavi and Videh, both. Lichchhavi king Chetaka was their chief ruler. Siddhartha ruled a federating unit of Vazzy confederation. Vardhaman was brought up in a republican environment. It is a prerequisite in a democracy to nurture tolerance, liberal outlook, relativistic perspective, freedom and an urge of mutual understanding. No democracy can succeed without these virtues. Vardhman imbibed the germs of non-violence

---

1 'Uttarapurana', Chapter 74, verse 282, 283.

2 'Ayarchula' 15/25.

and *Syadvada* (logical relativity) from this political environment. He promoted their vast proliferation in a congenial religious atmosphere and thus founded these principles on a firm footing.

The Family :

A man inherently virtuous and famous thereby is superior, the one celebrated by virtue of his patronymic is ordinary, another known after his matronymic is poor end one living on *borrowed* glory from his in-laws nothing but reprehensible. This apophthegm bears the stamp of sterling experience.

Mahavira was great in his own right. He was known by a number of names signifying innate and cultivated virtues. The seven names based on his singular virtues are Vardhman, Saman (Shramana), Mahavira,[1] Sanmati, Vira, Ativira and Gyataputra. Buddhistic scriptures name him as Nataputra. Mahavira's father bore three names Siddhartha, Shreyansa and Yashasvi. Kasyapa was his gotra (patronymic).[2] Mahavira's mother bore three names Trishala, Videhadutta and Priyakarini. Vasistha was her gotra (patronymic).[3]

The uncle of Mahavira was called Suparshva, the sister of his father Yashodaya, elder brother Nandivardhan, wife of his elder brother Jyestha[4] and elder sister Sudarshana.[5]

Mahavira's family was, both, prosperous and powerful. The family contributed much to the betterment of their ancestral shrine.

The Marriage :

Kumar Vardhman was grown up now. His physique was aglow with youth. In his earlier years also when he was a child he reflected charm and grace. Youth further enhanced this grace just as the naturally beautiful moon grows more beautiful during winter. Seeing the Kumar in the prime of his youth, the parents launched matrimonial negotiations.

---

1 'Ayarchula' 15/16, 2 Ibid, 15/17 3 Ibid 15/18, 4 'Awashyakchurni' Second part p. 164, 5 Ayarchula', 15/19-21.

A number of kings had arrived to participate in the birth celebration of Kumar Vardhman. King Jitashatru of Kalinga was one of them. He was simply bewitched by the graceful looks of the infant. He felt an irresistible urge to establish a matrimonial liaison with this family. Shortly afterwards he begot a daughter. They named her Yashoda. As the princess grew up, so did this inner urge of the king.

The queen of Jitshatru was called Yashodaya. She advised her husband—'The girl is now mature enough to be wedded. What course do you suggest for us?'

'What else can be done in the situation? We have to find out a match for her. Do you have some eligible bachelor in mind?'

'You are more competent to make a decision in like matters. How can I offer suggestions to you?'

'I hold, a mother has a better claim over a daughter. You should exercise your choice in the matter.'

'Shall I, then, let you know my mind regarding her?'

'Please do let me know your views.'

'Kumar Vardhman is an exceptionally intelligent and brilliant youth. I find him immensely suited to Yashoda.'

'Identical is my feeling. It is not a recent fancy of mine. For ages I have been craving for this happy event. I infer from this consensus that we are not only externally united but internally as well.'

Jitshatru sent his messenger with the auspicious proposal.

Siddhartha and Trishala naturally favoured the move. They mentioned it to Kumar. He however, would not agree to it.[1] Right from his childhood he had been indifferent to all things mundane. He had dreamt of carving a celibate's career for himself.

The royal parents doggedly pressed the son to budge from his stern stand. The latter had a profound regard for his parents. Nor would the parents let the son be out of their sight for a moment. Vardhman was fully conscious of this filial affection. Hence he resolved, so long as my parents survive let me not renounce the family.

---

[1] Swetambara tradition records that Vardhman conceded to the parental command while Digambara tradition holds otherwise.

Vardhman was strongly inspired to renounce householdership. He had the full competence to do so. Continence was his *forte.* He set store by it. It is evident from his later efforts meant to popularize continence.

The Inner Conflict for Liberation :

There are people who slumber when apparently awake and others who are awake when apparently asleep. Those with an inert consciousness are slumberous while outwardly awake. The ones with a ceaseless stream of consciousness are wide awake even when they are asleep.

Kumar Vardhaman had attained the category of those who are blessed with a perennially waking consciousness. Even when he had been in the womb of his mother he possessed extra-sensory-perception. His heart was suffused with the light of natural consciousness· Luxury and riches were his for the asking but he had no inclination to seek either.

Once Kumar Vardhaman was absorbed in meditation. His transparent mind delved in the unfathomed depths of inner consciousness. He transcended the gross horizons and trode upon the astral realms. He recaptitulated the memories of his prenatal existence.[1] He saw that the chain of incarnation is interminable. Its footmarks are seen all along the ceaseless truck of past.

Certain events of his past impinged themselves upon his consciousness. He experienced the innermost depths of contemplation.

Vivid reflections of the past events rallied before him. 'I was demigod of the category called Vasudevas named as Tripristha. Once a dance and music performance was arranged in my hall of amusement. I attended it alongwith my courtiers. I had instructed my bodyguard to continue the show until I would fall asleep. It was to conclude only when I had actually fallen asleep. The day had been a hectic one for me. The activities of the day had enervated me. It was a delightfully cool hour of midnight. The dance was *par excellence* and so was the musical accompaniment. Such the rarest accord of the moment, the danseuse, the singer and the instrumentalist was that all those present in the audience were thrilled beyond description. They were completely absorved in the divine harmony. They rose above temporal consciousness. The atmosphere was indeed soporofic for me. In no time did I lapse into sleep. However, the glorious dance and melody continued.

---

[1] 'Awashyakniryukti', Theme 71.

'I woke up as soon as the spell of deep slumber ended. With it woke up my ego. I sternly questioned the body-guard, 'Is it not an intransigence to defy my command?' He had no word to utter. He had been so much carried away by the dance and melody as to be completely oblivious of my slumber and my waking. I was furious at this audacity to disobey me. I was wild with anger. I summoned my soldiers and got molten lead poured into his ears. My wrath was pacified only when he was killed.[1]

'It seems my present incarnation is meant to atone for that violence. Whole of my interest, my devotion, my concern is aimed at cultivating non-violence. I will direct all of my energies to this end. My irrepressible urge craves its final fulfilment. I long for the day when I become one with non-violence, when nobody suffers any injury at my hand. Look how things exist! We, the people of status never show kindness to the humble. We exploit them to the maximum. We even traffic in them as if they were cattle. Even do they receive the roughest treatment. To me it seems we have never recognised unity of man. A merest lapse invites the severest punishment. It is common to inflict injury to men, torture and even-dismember them. When such heinousness marks our conduct with men, how can we be clement to animals? I wish this order to go. Coercion can hardly change the system. A change of heart alone shall bring about the desired change. A preponderance of love shall open up the new era. I will have to establish a rapport with each soul. I will have to sacrifice my ego on the altar of equanimity. The Herculean task entails nothing short of the biggest sacrifice, dogged pursuit and selfless devotion.

---

[1] 'Mahaviracharиyam' Chapter 3 p. 62 and 'Trishastishalakapurusha-charitra' 10/1/177.

The Self-embraced Yogic Death of the Parents :

As sudden as the descending dusk after bright evening, the heart of Mahavira was engulfed in gloom. He sought to analyse the cause. It was a premonition of the impending demise of king Siddhartha and queen Trishala. The intuition of Kumar led him to the chamber of Siddhartha. Siddhartha and Trishala were found to be conferring with each other there. He could see that they we engrossed in some serious issue. He felt hesitant at the threshold to transgress their privacy. Having caught sight of Kumar, Siddhartha called him in. 'Opportune is your visit Kumar. We needs must consult you. In fact we ourselves were going to summon you hither.'

Kumar offered his obeisance and said, 'Pray accept my greetings your majesty. I await your kind word to carry it out instantaneously.'

'Don't you see Kumar, we are ageing? Any day this life might be snapped. Shall it not be proper to hail death ere the latter summon us? Shramanas have ever braved death unhesitant. Lord Parshva has taught us how to prepare ourselves for the last voyage. Now is the moment we feel when we should translate the preaching into action.'

Kumar was anguished to hear this unanticipated gloomy discussion. The idea of parental bereavement was too much for him. Said he, 'Father, the subject is least palatable to me.'

'It is not a matter of one's discretion Kumar. You have to grapple with facts. The destiny shall fulfil itself. It is inevitable. What avails one to negate it?'

'Father! I happen to be aware of this self-evident truth. But doesn't the sun of Truth get muffled up with clouds of stupefaction caused by attachment? It is an anathema to me to so much as hear about death. How am I expected to advise on such an issue?'

'Dear Kumar you are a sage and a seer. You are an explorer of truth. You are fearless. What virtue there be that you don't own! And still you fail to get over filial affection. Is it not in the fitness of things to surmount this weakness?'

'Sire! Your love and mother's is so overwhelming. Call it weakness or whatever you choose.'

Siddhartha gave a turn to the trend and said—'Don't you wish we had a self-embraced yogic death?'

'How could it be allowed!'

'Should we not condition our mind and body for such a desirable eventuality?'

However Kumar braced himself up to concede it. That seems to be inevitable in the circumstances, he was constrained to say.

'Will you not assist us in such a course?'

'You are resolved to do so and hence I will be constrained to do so.'

Siddhartha held a conference with Nandiwardhan and Suparshwa and thereupon the royal couple proceeded to prepare for the course of last voyage leading to bodily dissolution. They reduced their diet. By means of most sparing diet and starvation the body was fully restrained. Non-attachment, renunciation and self-realisation resulted as a reward of the conquest of mind and its ultimate dissolution. Their approach to the self-chosen final end was so tranquilly quiet that death most imperceptibly crept on to envelope them.[1]

The parents had conferred the highest affection on Vardhaman. He had fully reciprocated their love. For full twenty eight years he thrived upon their protection.[2] Kumar now began to question himself. Was that protection a mere passing shadow and no more?

---

[1] 'Ayarchula' 15/25, [2] 'Awashyakchurni', 1st part p. 249.

The sorry demise of the worthy parents left the affectionate heart of Kumar tossed with anguish. The truth of life's essential transitoriness coloured his vision and consequent conduct.

It was plain to him that all human meetings were a prelude to impending painful partings. He attained those empyrean heights of love where true affection is seen seated upon the regal throne of affectionlessness.

Interview with Uncle :

The hopes of Suparshwa were palled. It had been his cherished desire to see Vardhaman enthroned as a mighty emperor. Prediction of celebrated astrologers had assured him of this desired event. So had his intuitution indicated to him. He had given a wide currency to this conviction. Led by these acclaimed views Shrenik, Prayot and many other princes used to attend on Vardhaman. His undaunted virility and character evinced the virtues supposed to inhere in every emperor.[1]

The hint that Vardhaman was willing to renounce householdership and retire as a Shramana simply exploded this hearty dream. He had hardly recovered from the terrific shock of his brother's mourning when these newly-spreading rumours of Vardhaman's final renunciation struck him as does a thunderbolt.

Vardhaman found Suparshwa stepping into his chamber and that without any intimation in advance. He was surprised at this sudden visit. He stood up to receive him, saluted him and said, 'Uncle sire, your kind visit gratifies me. It is your sheer kindness to call on me. But I wonder why you should have strained yourself so much. I should have been called to your apartment.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', first part p. 249.

Suparswa smiled and replied, 'What difference does it make Kumar whether I come to you or you to me? Pray pay heed to obliterate the differences that seem to have cropped up between us of late.'

'Not that I know if there be any difference between us uncle.'

'Dear son you do speak truth. No shadow of a discord did exist between us during the life-time of my brother. But since...........'

'Wherefrom this 'since', sire? It is you who command me as a father now.'

The memory of late brother and Kumar's sweet and sentimental words agitated Suparshwa's feelings. Tears brimmed up his eyes. He broke down into an anguished cry. His voice was choked up. Kumar gazed at him stunned. Somehow Suparshwa regained his self-control by suppressing his feelings and occupied a seat.

'It is our grave misfortune that my brother and sister-in-law have left us. But what cannot be cured must be endured. This smothering tragedy has triggered your decision to renounce the family. This move cannot leave us unperturbed.'

'Uncle, Sir, do I propose to quit my home? The truth is I have gone astray and seek to relodge into my consciousness that is my true home.'

'God forbid if it be so. Don't you now occupy your own home, where you were born and bred up?'

'Uncle, do you measure my existence with twenty-eight years only? Didn't I axist prior to that? If I did exist—then how does the present home belong to me? My consciousness is my home which is never severed from me. I wish to be one with this enveloping boon of consciousness.'

'You philosophise, Kumar. I expect you to be practical.'

'In what way do you want me to be practical?'

'The tradition of Vazzi federation warrants attending the sessions of council and ruling it.'

'I know, Uncle, this duty enjoined upon us. But you will realise my inherent repuganance to serve in an order where violence and inequity prevail.'

The graceful and courteous replies of Kumar reassured Suparswa. He had no inclination to protract the discussions. However, before departing he assured Kumar that he would apply his mind to the issue coolly before the next session of a similar solemn conference is held.

2

The Campaign for Emancipation

Vardhaman found himself busy with the preliminaries attending upon the impending new life freed of the stately responsibilities. Nandiwardhan got a whiff of it. He approached Mahavira and said, 'We are victims of the twin disaster, brother, first the parents' bereavement and now your more stern decision to renounce family life. Shall I survive this jolt? Shall it behove you to add insult to injury? Pray, forsake to do so. Snap not the family ties so ruthlessly. You ought to bear the responsibilities bequeathed to you by your worthy father. I am at your beck and call. I again entreat you to abstain from renouncing the family life.'[1]

'Dear brother, the stately duties cease to bind me. A system admitting of human misery is least compatible with my ethics. I long for emancipation. Permit me to move towards my goal.'

'Dear brother! Statecraft appears most imperfect to you. Little does it do to uplift man morally. It, in fact, augments the misery of slavery. What prevents you, in the circumstances, from succeeding to the throne in order to tone it up and redeem it?'

'We happen to be rulers in a republic, brother. A republican system entails a regard for the consensus of opinion. How can a solitary being turn the tide according to his fancy? Let me first change my own heart. If providence crowns my experiment with success, I will venture to apply it on a vast social scale.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', first part p. 248.

'I concede brother, the veracity of your views. Far be it from my intentions to block your progress to your thrice lofty goal. But is it fair for you to abdicate now? How shall I exonerate myself of the change of banishing my younger brother following upon the heels of our parental loss?'

Nandiwardhan's point was incontrovertible and still more formidable was his sentiment. The compassionate heart of Kumar could defy neither.

The chariot of the evening sun was coming to a hitch after its strenuous day's journey. The cowherds gathered the stray herd and made for their respective villages. The traders were collecting their wares to close their shops. Horde of things there be that manifest themselves with the emerging rays of sun and vanish when the latter come to a close. The divergent discussions of Suparshwa and Nandiwardhan held with Kumar were yet to come to a close.

The mere brushing of the pollen with its wings connot satisfy a black-bee. A deep draught of nectar alone satiates it. Suparshwa and Nandiwardhan were not at peace with themselves and they continued to discuss their mutual worry. Like a keen black-bee they longed to extract the refreshing nectar of hope that Kumar Vardhaman was still witholding.

Kumar Vardhaman was torn between the divergent forces of his determination and the pathos of his uncle and brother. He wished to march along the great path of renunciation but with their consent as his compassion and non-violence were through and through inspired with natural tenderness.

Kumar visited Nandiwardhan's chamber to drive home his approach. It bleased him to find his uncle and brother already in conference. It needed no effort to follow that his imminent renunciation was the subject of this conference. He paid respects to them and seated himself nearby.

Suparshwa broached the subject of renunciation. Said Nandiwardhan, 'It is the worst disaster that can befall us. We simply cannot stand it. Kumar ought to change his mind.

I have already raised this issue with Kumar. We are all present today. I say, let's conclude the matter once for all.'

'The conclusion is that you may kindly forsake to impede my course, 'said Kumar vigorously.

Nandiwardhan said, 'It is a sheer impossibility Kumar. I know your non-violence shall not allow you to inflict more injuries to our already bleeding hearts.'

Nandiwardhan pressed his point indefatigably to bend Kumar peforce. 'I must renounce the householdership. I will not budge from this course. I proceed on my odyssey to fulfil a great mission. I beseech your kind co-operation to that end. What makes you hamper me?' In a single breath Kumar vented himself fully.

Nandiwardhan had realised that Kumar could not be held back for all times and hence a brutal adamancy was pintless. 'I am keen to retain you but not for all times Kumar.'

'Till when, then?'

'I wish you to abide till the state observes the mourning of our late royal parent's demise. Thereafter you may renounce the world.'

'How long shall we be in mourning?'

'For two years only.'[1]

'It is too long a duration.'

'Howsoever lengthy it be, you have to honour it.'

Suparshwa supported Nandiwardhan. Kumar saw no respite from their ever growing pressure. Then I should yield to it but in my own way, he thought.

Kumar said, 'I can agree but on one commitment from you.'

'What is it?' spoke out both together.

'I can stay here for two years only if in the household I enjoy the full privilege to practise my own spiritual course, not otherwise.'

Both the parties to the commitment mutually agreed.

---

1 'Awashyakchurni', first part p. 249; 'Acharangachurni' p. 304.

The issue of renouncing householdership was forgotten for the moment.

The Freedom from Body-consciousness :

The flame of emancipation blew ablaze in Kumar's mind. So terrific it was that no blasts of luxury could put it out. Kumar had transcended the walls of mind albeit enclosed in domestic walls. To be hidebound was to him a great anathema, murder of freedom. He opened up the tri-dimensional cultivation of emancipation-non-violence, truth and celibacy. To cultivate non-violence, he evolved fellow feeling. Even an injury to micro-organisms was unpalatable to him. He would abstain from food and water that bore life. Nor would he eat during the night hours.[1]

To cultivate truth, he practised meditation and concentration. By suggesting to himself his essential non-duality he practised non-attachment and thereby opened up the vistas of self-realisation.[2]

To cultivate continence he practised a conquest of the palate. In respect of diet numerous experiments were conducted. Thus he attained equanimity and apathy towards tasteful or flat food. Kumar freed himself of body-possessiveness and thus the remnant spark of desire was gone for good.[3]

The royal household never held this ascetic code of conduct in esteem. In mild tones Suparshwa and Nandiwardhan would, once a while, remonstrate at Kumar's peculiar life. However, Kumar had, to meet any such eventuality, extorted a promise from them to let him be free with himself.

The wheel of time revolves on. We feel it speeding on while we are happy and satisfied. But when we impatiently await the fulfilment of our desired the wheel seems to be stuck up somewhere.

---

[1] 'Ayaro', 9/1/11-15; 'Acharangachurni', p. 304.

[2] 'Ayaro', 9/1/11; 'Acharangachurni', p. 304.

[3] 'Ayaro' 9/4.

Mahavira felt the tedious couple of years painfully protracted. At last the hour of fulfilment had arrived. The warrior of emancipation had lifted his step forward to diagnose the primaeval cause of bondage.[1]

---

[1] 'Awashyakachurni', first part p. 249.

3

The Resolve to be Free

A number of questions bedevil me whenever I hear the cliche that Mahavira obtained initiation on the tenth day of moon in the dark half of the month of *Mangsir.* Is it possible for a man to be initiated one fine morning? In initiation an occurrence at a point of time? Is it not the reward of a prolonged course of contemplation and meditation? If the situation admits of these questionings, the concept of a sudden and conclusive initiation at a particular point of time is a myth. To my mind occurs the proverbial fable of the earthen pitcher freshly drawn from the potter's oven, a favourite device of the logicians. A drop of water strikes it and dries up. So does the second. The successive drops thus vanish and there comes the last one that finds the pitcher wet. The wetness of the pitcher was certainly not the consequence of the last drop. It is the cumulative effect of the numberless drops preceding it. In that perspective I find that initiation is not the result of a day's attainment. It is the reward of a fairly prolonged mental and spiritual preparation. Mahavira pored minutely over the philosophies of the day—Kriyavad, Akriyavada, Vinayavada and Agnanavada (agnosticism). His initiation was a reward of this protracted course of study and mental preparation.

Mahavira arrived at the outer grove of Ksatriyakund after quitting his home. It was the initial phase of his search for emancipation. Home cribs and confines man. An explorer of freedom cuts these confines asunder and adopts the vast land and wide sky as his home. The second phase of emancipation was freedom from family ties. Domestic ties fetter man. The lover of freedom snaps this chain and adopts all living beings as his kingdom.

The third phase of emancipation was renouncing the riches. Riches put a wedge between man and the rest of the human fraternity. The pioneer of emancipation discards it to effect an integral unity with human brotherhood.

Prabuddha happens to be an intimate friend of mine. He would not uphold renunciation for the sake of emancipation. He pleads that the external fetters won't count consequent upon quashing the inner bandages. Conversely, if the inner bondages pester us, the existence or otherwise of the external ones matter little. In support of his argument he said, 'Mahavira had first snapped the inner ties. Why would you, then, give significance to the outer ties that he snapped?' He cited a paradox from Acharanga Sutra, 'Emancipation is experienced neither in a village nor a jungle. It can be had in a village as well as in a jungle.'

Putting a stop to his harangue I queried, 'Won't you let me know, friend, what you convey by inner bondages?'

'Ego and possessive instinct.'

'You seem to mean that Mahavira first discarded these bondages before discarding his home? Is it not so?'

'Precisely so, sir.'

'Renouncing ego and attachment is a mental phenomenon. On the plane of quest of emancipation it does enjoy a priority. I don't deny it. But let me know, dear sir, won't it be necessary to snap the bondages in order to establish a rapport with external world? How do I perceive the events that take place on the mental plane? I can directly perceive the events that occur on the gross plane. I dwell upon the external event of Mahavira's renunciation for the simple reason that it occurred in the realm of tangible things. It was this event that had lent hope to the universe of his resolve to launch upon the great exploration of truth. The event of his quitting his home shall hold a beacon-light to humanity in its entirety.'

'Is it denied to a householder to taste emancipation?'

'When did I deny it? But I do assert that the one who proposes to keep the torch of emancipation burning shall have to give up the one hearth that binds him. Such a renunciation, in my view is a process to make all homes as our own home.'

'Why do you project Mahavira in this lopsided ideal, Sir?'

'I won't admit this indictment. Never did I say that a householder cannot explore truth and taste it in it fulness. I recommend renouncing one's home for one who wishes to be one with one and all and offer them the boon of emancipation. To my mind it is on account of this reason that Mahavira proclaimed his vew of emancipation.'

'What was that proclamation?'

'Mahavira proclaimed before the surging mass of Vaishali while in Gyatakhanda garden—"I renounce all acts that happen to be sinful this moment and for good.'

'Sin is a mental gland. Mahavira pronounced his resolve to abstain from it. How does it imply renunciation of one's home?'

'Why do you define sin in a cliche-ridden language?

'It is not bondage a sin? It is the prime sin as it breeds all other sins. The core of Mahavira's pronouncement was to abstain from all acts that might hamper his freedom.'

Mahavira never advised mankind to renounce their families, once he had experienced emancipation. On the other hand he prescribed it for them who propose to breathe the absolute and uncompromising air of emancipation.

In addition to his home, Mahavira renounced the orthodox sectarianism he had been brought up in. He had inherited the sect of Lord Parshwa. However, he had sought no initiation in this tradition. As soon as he initiated himself in his own way he proclaimed—

"The factors that seek to suppress me shall be met with valiantly. I will never never submit to them. I can sacrifice this physical frame but not my freedom."

Prabuddha's gaze was pinned to the horizon. He had realized that the super-vacuum alone can fill the vacuum.

4

The Flame of Valour

There is a student who is known for his inteligence. He enquired of me, 'What is the aim of life?'

Said I, 'The aim is not born with man. One shapes one's aim in life. When maturity dawns upon one different individuals fix up different aims for themselves depending upon their native proclivities.'

Said the student, 'I am not curious about these time-bound aims. I wish to learn of the aim that is final, certain and universal the *summum bonum.*'

'That aim is emancipation' said I after dipping myself for a moment in the inner beaming light of mind.

It was a reply from my inner self. The youngman readily accepted it. And still I felt I should further elucidate the point. Said I, 'Don't you see a parrot seeking the open wide sky outside his cage? Does a tiger like its cage, for that matter? An elephant would prefer the natural habitat of a jungle to all the mansions put together. These are the sparks that the irrepressible flood-lights of emancipation throw up. Rightly did Maharshi Manu say—"That which occurs in bondage is unhappiness. That which occurs in freedom is happiness. Freedom is happiness and its reverse unhappiness.'

Mahavira took a leap forward to blow off the ashes covering the cinders of freedom. Thereafter he dispersed the crowd that had been following him.

It is natural to be reminded of Ram's exile in this context. The two events were not identical and still bore a great likeness with each other. Ram renounced his home to seek an unknown destination. He was accompanied by Laxman, Sita and his bow and arrows. Mahavira also proceeded to the unknown. He however, had no man, woman or arm with himself. Both cherished to uphold the glory of emancipation. Both fought great battles to accomplish the goal and conquered their respective foes. But the battles and the conquests vary in each case. Ram's foes are the marauders that curtail the freedom of the meek. Mahavira's are the accumulated experiences, the latencies that throttle the freedom of mind and stifle the self. Ram conquered them with arms and Mahavira with meditation and penances. Ram shines in his deed and Mahavira in his spiritualism. They constitute the two wheels of the chariot of Indian culture that have lent and will lend momentum to it.

After departure from his native place Mahavira's next halt was at Karmargram (today's Kamanchhapra). He was indifferent to his meals. He observed fast on the day of initiation as well as on the following day. Any place would do for him. He had no concern for bodily comforts. The one burning question before him was how to remedy the menaces to human freedom.

Mahavira stood outside the village at the fringe of the forest.[1] He is absorbed in meditation. His sight is fixed on his nasal tip. His forearms are directed towards his knees. His immobility would create an illusion of a pillar from a distance.

A cowherd drives his bullocks homeward. He saw Mahavira in his stable posture. He left his bullocks there and went home. Mahavira was meditating in search of truth. He was so much preoccupied with the spiritual pursuit as to be completely unaware of the external world. The bullocks went astray, grazing. The cowherd returned as soon as his domestic duties allowed him to. He found his bullocks gone. He enquired of Mahavira, 'Where have my bullocks gone?'

---

[1] First year of pursuit at Karmargram.

Mahavira did not respond to the question. He was so deeply absorbed in replying to the perennial questions of his self that the cowherd's questions eluded his ears. How could any reply come forth?'

The cowherd inferred that he had no knowledge where the bullocks happened to be. He himself moved towards the jungle to trace them out. It was nearing dusk. The darkness was fast enveloping the earth. The cowherd plodded on in search of his bullocks with no avail. He returned home hopeless and tired.

Now the tide is turned and the light is coming into its own to vanquish darkness. The sun promoted it. The new day has dawned. The nocturnal sloth was doomed with its counterpart, the darkness. The cowherd woke up. He left straight to resume his search. He wandered to where Mahavira stood meditating, unmoving and stationary like a mountain. He found the bullocks grazing in the vicinity of Mahavira. The last evening's exertion, frustration and the sight of the bullocks close to Mahavira inflamed him. It sparked in him a doubt that the Muni had designs over his bullocks. That was the cause perhaps why the saint stood mute to his queries. He was beside himself with wrath. No sooner had he raised his rope to lash Mahavira than he heard the steps of an approaching horse.[1] The rider was no other than Nandiwardhan who was stunned to see the sight. He revealed the identity of Mahavira to the rustic who sincerely rued his foolish conduct.

Mahavira awoke from his deep meditation. King Nandiwardhan stood before him. He said, 'You are unattended here. You are lost in meditation in this wilderness. Assaults similar to the one that could somehow be averted are likely to be repeated. Permit me to appoint a few soldiers in your attendance to guard you.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 268-270.

Lord said solemnly, 'It is not supposed to be done, Nandiwardhan. A votary of emancipation banks on his own confidence. He cannot conceive dependence on others for his progress.'[1]

The incident was the lowest rung of the ladder of emancipation. Self-dependence and indefatigability form its two beams.

Self-dependence and indefatigability form the two eyes of existence. These eyes enable us to observe externally and internally. Man is only one link in the chain of existence. Indefatigability is his nature. That which exists cannot be inert. The principle if given a logical garb would be—Activity is the characteristic of existence. That which is incapable of activity is a myth like the flower blooming in the vacuous sky. Man is true and hence indefatigability constitutes his wings and self-dependence enlivens him with dynamism.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni. I pt. p. 270.

5

Non-Acquisition Vis-A-Vis Fearlessness

I was lost in the subtle realms once. Then I regained my body-consciousness. Enquired I of myself, 'That body is the primary means to accomplish spiritual ends. Is it your own experience or a hearsay?'

'Does it not ring true to you?'

'To me it seems to be an imperfect truth.'

'A semantic expression is doomed to be imperfect. Why do you seek perfection in it?'

'You seem to be unfamiliar with human ways. Recognition of the body has put a stamp of recognition on selfishness and individuality. Is it not incumbent upon man to seek perfection to remedy this predicament? Your argument can hold water only if body is admitted as the prime means of vice.'

'How come?'

'Vice is bred by attachment and infatuation. It originates from body-consciousness. It then extends itself to others.'

It appeared that body-consciousness endorsed my hypothesis. And still I was provoked to elaborate my hypothesis. Lord Mahavira propounded when he realised the truth, one who cannot discern the conscious from the material cannot acquire the right vision.

Sankhya philosophy holds—Liberation is unthinkable so long as true wisdom is not accomplished.

Vedanta holds—No spiritual pursuit fructifies so long as the body-consciousness lasts.

I visualized body-consciousness in the context of Lord Mahavira's initiation. We saw how Mahavira left his abode alone. He had discarded the jewels, and the apparels. His feet were bare. Nothing interposes between him and the earth and the sky. No utensil is carried for meals. Carrying any wealth was unthinkable. None accompanies him. A truly detatched being. The pursuit of renunciation has set off the renunciation of the set mental modes, the renunciation of set notions, the renunciation of physical appellations.

I meekly observed—'Such a body is the prime means of spiritual regeneration. Any body may not be the prime means of spiritual regeneration but such a body certainly is the means of spiritual regeneration that has shed attachment once for all.'

The only possession of the Lord was his body and in addition to it his consciousness—the consciousness that is blessed with the stream of bliss on one side and indefatigability on the other.

Previously affection was the link with the body. Now the relation is that of give and take. Earlier it was a relation of deferred payment. Now it is a system of cash payment. The Lord spent most of his time in meditation. His meals were sparing, just enough to subsist.

His relation with the body was nothing but healthy. He would offer it the necessary nutrition and the latter would repay him with necessary energy in its turn. He would deny it all surplus nutrition and the latter would deny him all redundant energy that might pollute, stimulate or sedate the mind.

The Lord had no home. He would pass most of his time in a deserted house, temple, a bower or forest. Once a while a cremation ground would lodge him.[1] In the first year of his pursuit he made a transit from Kollak to Morak. Wandering monks had built a hermitage in the outskirts of it. He visited them. The chief monk had been friendly to the Lord's father, Siddhartha. He knew the Lord well. A hermit saw the

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/2/2, 3.

Lord coming. He informed the chief monk. He emerged from his hermitage and instantaneously recognised the Lord. He offered his hospitality to the Lord. The two greeted each other. On the chief monk's insistence the Lord stayed there for a day. The next day he made his move for the fresh destination. Said the chief monk—

'Great Monk! Treat this hermitage as your own. You reside here so long as you choose. Since you have decided to move let me not be an obstacle. However, I wish you make this place as your residence during the coming rains.'

Mahavira left the place. During the next few months he roamed about the neighbouring places. Since he had committed to be there again he returned thither before the advent of rain. It is a marvel that the self-centered passionate lover of freedom that he was submitted to the desire of the chief monk. The chief monk arranged for Mahavira's stay in a cottage. He occupied it. He had only one engagement, that of profound meditation, and by this introspection unravelling the true existence buried under the thick layers of acquired impressions. When he cared a fig for the native cottage (of body) why would he bother himself about the monk's cottage? The hermit who owned the cottage did not relish this carelessness of Mahavira towards the cottage. He requested Mahavira, 'It is better if a little care is spared for this cottage.'

Time elapsed. The sky was cast and lo, it began to rain. summer succumbed to the new season. Cool breeze cheered the heated up nerves. The air was exultant. The earth was garbed in lush green.

The kine haunted the jungle pastures. The grass was not yet high. It had just sprouted. The starving cows would approach right up to the cottage in search of grass. The other hermits protected their cottages carefully. The cows would explore the only cottage that was vulnerable where Mahavira resided. They would consume the straw of its thatches. The hermit approached the chief monk and submitted,

'The cows eat up the straw of my cottage. I brought it to the notice of Mahavira who turns a deaf ear to my request. What do you advise me to do now?'

He was torn between anger and courtesy.

The chief-monk sought Mahavira's company at the opportune moment and submitted meekly. 'Monk! Creatures possessing a mere rudimentary intelligence like birds care to protect their nest. You happen to be from a warrior race and still fail to protect your cottage. Should I hope that no such complaint would reach me from any of the hermits in future?'

Mahavira's brief rejoinder was, 'Rest assured, no more shall you receive such complaints.' The chief monk returned to his cottage satisfied.

Thought Mahavira, 'I am engaged in the quest of truth. To divert my attention towards the safety of the cottage would be improper. But the hermits won't relish the idea of the straw-walls serving as a fodder to the kine. Should I then continue to live here?'

The anticipation of embarrassment spurred his feet onwards. The first fortnight of the rains was spent in the cottage, the rest of the season in the Shulapaniyaksa temple at Asthikgram.

The incident of the hermitage added new dimensions to Mahavira's campaign for emancipation. The vows that he took following this incident signify it. The five vows taken by him on the eve of his departure from the hermitage were :—

(1) I will forsake to live at a place I am unwelcome.
(2) My time shall mostly pass in meditation.
(3) I shall in large measure observe silence.
(4) My palm shall serve me as my eating bowl.
(5) I shall not greet the householders.[1]

Thus were opened up the vistas of the inner world. The tyranny of common courtesies ceased to hamper his accomplishment of freedom. The gnawing fear about the vulnerability of body, things and mental associations ceased to perturb him.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. p. 271, 272.

6

The Gloom of Fear : The Light of Fearlessness

Lord Mahavira escalated along his spiraling spiritual path. He is gainning in confidence and indefatigability. Numberless are the nettles in his way. The thorns prick and still they fail to ruffle him.

It is the maiden year of his penances. The venue is Asthikgram. He adopts the suitable posture to meditate in the Shulapaniyaksha temple. The Villagers are horrified. The temple priest is as gravely terrified with apprehensions.

They said in one voice, 'Venerable Sir! Accompany us to human habitat. The place is fraught with indescribable dangers. It is least advisable to lodge here. Shulapaniyaksha is the cruellest demi-god. Whoever stays here is found dead the next morning, invariably.'

Mahavira said, 'I can certainly make for the village. But how shall I miss this golden opportunity for the sake of rural safety? Fearlessness is the first step to freedom. I amply realised it during my meditation. I am well set upon the road to fearlessness. It is the most critical hour. Should I withdraw my step now?'

The people argued in their own way and Mahavira thought otherwise. They went home tongue-tied.

Mahavira is stood in the yaksa temple self-absorbed. As the time passes the pitch dark and frozen calm of the night intensifies and the concentration of the Lord grows.

There is a diabolical laughter. The veil of quiet was torn. The jungle was atremble. Mahavira was unaffected. Presently, an elephant appeared there. He hit Mahavira with his sharp tusks. But it could not ruffle Mahavira. The elephant was gone and a cobra appeared instead. Its terrible hiss scared the birds perched on trees. It bit Mahavira and the latter was unruffled. The fury of the yaksa vanished.[1]

You may seek a rational explanation of the narration whether Mahavira really experienced it? Whether a demi-god did torture him? But how am I supposed to interpret the incidents? The volumes wherefrom I cite the instances are accessible to you. If you explore the inner worlds hand in hand with me I may offer you suitable explanations.

We have just crossed the threshold of the inner realms of mind. There is a flood of ideas here. Since we have barely stepped in we have to put up with these harrowing ideas. As we probe deeper the stifling ideation will grow thinner. As soon as we approach the next inward door the influx of ideas shall vanish.

We are entering into the second door. We shall be constrained to pass through the strait alleys flanked with dreams. Beyond it lies the highway for us to tread alone.

Now is the stage to enter the third entrance. The fearful gorges! How blood curdling are the wildernesses! There stand before us the ghost and the chimeras. From yonder side come pouncing the ferocious beasts. We see the pythons, the venomous serpents and the scorpions. Dark as death is this environment. The monstrous laughter curdles our blood. There are piercing ominous shrieks. How deadly is this world! How dangerous this phase!

We come upon the next and the fourth threshold. Brilliance marks the air. It is divinity personified. The blessed one who reaches this far reaches his final destination beyond which no exertions need be taken. However, none has covered this distance without suffering in the way the chimeras, the ghosts, the wild beasts.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. pp. 273, 274.

What else these doors be but the thresholds of our mental ruffledness! What does the opening up of these doors signify? Nothing but the concentration of mind. The ideas and the dreams are nothing but the gathered up impressions of the past, the latencies that need purging up. What do these chimeras and wild beasts stand for? They are no more than accumulated layers after layers of notions and imprints of experiences.

The wild shrieks, the elephant and the python appearing near Lord Mahavira are his impressions and mental grooves that projected themselves thus. He is proceeding on across the deep gorges. Each pursuant needs must cross these gorges prior to realising the truth and the self. Lord Buddha also crossed these gorges. He was in meditation. It was the full-moon day of the second month of Indian calendar viz. Vaisakh. He experienced a little restiveness. He, then, resolved—'I shall not leave this seat without attaining enlightenment.' Gradually, he faced the chimeras of beasts, python and monsters. These figures tormented Buddha. But his patience was unexhausted. The mind at last was tranquillised. He was enlightened.

This contains the spiritual course that leads to Godhood. No spiritual pioneer can afford to short-circuit this course.

Now begins the second year of his pursuit. He is in transit from South Vachala to North Vachala. He was pleased to traverse along the median of Kankhal hermitage. He proceeded a bit when he came across some cowherds. The latter forbade him to advance thither.

'Does it not lead to North Vachala?'

'It does, sire?'

'Is it not shorter than the round about way?'

'That it happens to be.'

'Then what prevents me from passing along this course?'

'It is not safe, my lord.'

'Name the danger, I say.'

'Lord, a serpent named Chandkaushik haunts this path. His sight radiates venom which proves fatal to all the pray. He gazes at the prey and the latter is reduced to ashes. We pray you to turn back.'

Mahavira was, in fact, elated. He wanted to give a trial to himself on the touchstone of fearlessness and goodwill. The conspiracy of circumstances rendered such a test possible. He framed his mind as a spiritual explorer should. 'That about which a phlegmatic dunce is assured truly constitutes the highest danger. That about which he is apprehensive contains the least danger!'

The poor cowherds were agape with wonder. Mahavira's steps carried him forward.

Mahavira chose the *mandapam* of the temple as the venue for his meditation. Here indulges Chandakaushik in his serpentine frolics. The Lord occupies the central place where he stands in the posture of dedication. The forearms swing downwards. The finger-tips reach the knee level. The heels touch each other. The toes are parted by a distance of four finger-width. The unwinking eyes are fixed at the tip of the nose. The body is inert. The tongue is mute. Breathings are nominal and the mind thought-free. The Lord is in full occupation of the internal realm where one is crowned with the deepest concentration. All contacts with the external world and sensory perception are withdrawn. He moves aloft in the internal world. He has transcended envy, anguish, pain, fear and such other mental inflictions and discomforts of heat and cold, poison and arms and such other physical tortures.

Chandkaushik made his wonted forest beat and returned to the temple. The moment he entered the *mandapam* he saw the Lord. The place was weatherbeaten. One would shrink from such a vicinity. Who would dare step into it? Never did he see any human figure disturbing his secluded haunts. He was nonplussed for an instant. The next instant saw his hood raised high in the air. Venom permeated his sight. He hissed furiously and stared at Mahavira. In the third instant he stared at him with a will to fell him aground. To his astonishment the figure refused to fall. It was as erect as ever. His defeat gave an edge to his fury. He withdrew a little. He, then, dashed ahead and gazed at the Lord with his poison-filled eyes. The Lord was unaffected. The third time he gazed at the sun to activate his venom and sought to shoot it at the Lord. No reaction, however, occurred. The Lords till stands steady and unmoving.

The wrath of Chandkaushik knew no bounds. He crawled forward. He portrayed ferocity with his invading hood, wrathfully writhing body, venomous eyes and swordlike tongue.

He crawled near the Lord's toe. He bit the left toe of the Lord with all his might. The power of concentration prevailed upon the venom. The monster kept gazing. The leg was his next target and thence creeping up the leg the Lord's throat. But his exertions yielded no results. He was consumed in anger. He was prostrated by the terrific strain of repeated attacks. He receded a little and sat still.

The Lord awoke from his meditation. He found Chandakaushik seated before himself, his vast body entwined. The Lord eyed him with a pacific and compassionate glance. The venom of the python's eye was purged. The whole of his being was quiet, composed and tranquil.

Such is the dignity and triumph of non-violence and fellow-feeling.

The vigilant cowherds were not far behind. From tree-tops they saw the sight. It was so marvellous a sight. They circulated the news that Chandakaushik had been pacified. It was a momentous and auspicious news. The masses were so much relieved to learn that the way to Kanakhal was no more unsafe. Anybody might traverse it now. There was an upsurge of spectators. There they saw in the centre of the place a yogi standing in a meditative posture, with the serpent facing him gently. Whose very name scared them to death was being watched by the thousands. What a curious sight! They would scarcely believe their eyes. Lord Mahavira continued to be there for a fortnight. His camp there signified the four great travails—fearlessness and fellow feeling, the inviolateness of the inner realms of meditation by things external, the dignity of non-violence converting fury into gentlessess and the consequent relief to the masses from the growing fears.[1]

The second year of his spiritual pursuit is in progress. The Lord is advancing towards the Thunak suburb from Surabhipur. The expanse of the rolling waves of Ganges lay before him. The Lord watches it from the bank. Siddhadutta's boat awaits the passengers to take them across. The boatman prays him to board it. The lord accedes to his request.

The boat sets towards its goal. The passengers are busy conversing. Mahavira is absorbed into himself. It is midstream now. The nature presents a different sight. The sky is cast. There is sharp and cracking lightning. The roar of the hurricane is thunderous. The waves were sky-high. The boat tossed as a leaf. The passengers were in panic. And still the Lord sat unmoving, aside. His meditation is secure as if unaware of the furious mask of nature. Fear breeds fear and fearlessness a feeling akin to it. The biological principle of like begets like applies to mental feelings of man. The fearlessness of Mahavira took away the fright of the passengers. A look at his placid demeanour rendered them free of all fear. Nature also grew calm. The passenger duly disembarked across the river.[2] Mahavira crossed over the stream of mortal fears to disembark in frightlessness.

---

1 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. pp. 277, 279.

2 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 280, 281.

7

Amongst The Primitives

The musk has to suffer the pestle and the mortar before its sweet fragrance can pervade the air. The incense stick has to burn itself before it can hope to fill the air with its lovely fragrance. The gold attains its lustre by passing through the ordeal of fire. Ours is the world of ordeal and struggle. One who embraces penances, trials and tribulations shall emerge victorious.

The Lord is bent upon perfecting his consciousness. Penances and uphill struggle follow him like a shadow.

He sits in the *mandapam* of the grove. There is a tank in front. A few people endeavour to dewater it. The tank is emptied. All this is to receive the fresh shower. And the raining has started. By evening it was like a cloudburst. The earth's surface was an endless ocean. The streams grew active. The tank was full. The Lord thought—The tank was empty sometime back. Now it is full. What is it that fills it? It is the water that fills it. What agencies did accomplish it? The streams made it possible. Had there been no steams, how would it be filled? The ideation was introverted. What fills the tank of human consciousness? It is the accumulating impressions on human consciousness that fill it. What agency accomplishes it? The agency of human consciousness. The chain of thought led him to the plane where he realised that the reservoir of human consciousness can be emptied to its rock-bottom. The accumulated mental associations, the layers of impressions on the soft mental sands can be emptied like the water of a tank. The device to keep it free of sludge and water is to close the streams that pour in incessantly.

The thought-process grew profounder. A group of travellers happened to visit the grove then. They saw Lord Mahavira. One of them advanced and questioned the Lord about his identity. The Lord was too absorbed with his own self to respond. He ventured to repeat his humble query.

'Who do you happen to be, Sir.'

'I am engaged in the process of knowing who I am.'

'I cannot follow riddles. Pray let me know who you are plainly.'

'I am a *bhiksu.* (monk)'

'It is our haunt of pleasure. Why should you occupy it by standing here?'

'The purpose that led me to be a *bhiksu* causes me to stand thus.'

'Who permitted you to be here?'

'The place belongs to none and hence it is as good as given by all.'

'Well, you say you are a *bhiksu*, you may then preach us.'

'I am myself in quest of truth yet.'

The interrogator left the place dissatisfied with his futile labour.

It was almost dusk. Then followed the usual night—a particularly dark night. A couple came wandering. The male shouted from outside—

'Who's there?'

No response.

'Who's there?'

No response.

The couple stepped in. They detected the hazy contours of a human figure in one corner. The man approached it and ventilated his annoyance, 'What do you mean by not responding thrice?' He began to call him names and left.[1]

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/2/11, 12; 'Acharangchurni' p. 316.

The Lord thought—To stay in another's place is unpleasant, but to stay in a sequestered place can be equally unpleasant. To retort violently can bread bitterness but the same bitterness is harvested by silence.

'What avails me to generate ill-will amongst others? It is a human-infested land. Wheresoever I move, they chase me. Some of them are curious about me. My proneness to be silent peeves them. Some come upon my haunts, in search of lonely spots. My presence stultifies their attempt and they are angered. Some of them are inquisitive and are attracted by the oddities of a sadhu. Their bustle descecrates the tranquility of the place. When I meditate unwinking my staring eyes frighten the youngsters. Were it no better for me, then, to retire to regions where primitives live? There the habitation is sparing. The villages are few and far between. Solitary mountains and uncontaminated jungles bless these places. There neither my presence shall offend anybody nor any one pester me.

The will of the Lord would take no time in turning into action. If he willed something, the next moment saw its fulfilment. Like a winged bird he turned toward wildernesses of such zones that culture had not contaminated. He had no need to seek any body's advice for consent. There was no burden to be shifted to some one else. His property was a wick that constantly emitted light. The container followed the wick.

The present biographer had infinite questions thronging his mind. What was the number of his visits to the primitive haunts? What places did he frequent? Where would he lodge himself during such sojourns and for how long? How did he find this experience? How did the primitives respond to him? Satisfactory replies did not come forth. Lastly, a resort to abstract communication was had. The biographer succeeded in conveying the questions to him for whom they were meant. But the transmission of replies could not be correctly received at this end.

Learning that it was Gautam and Sudharma who chronicled the experiences of the Lord, I aimed my inquisitive communication towards them. I could feel that my queries were duly received. And still I was a loser in not catching their response. And still I went on probing. This time I questioned Devardhigani and the latter could send me communications. His response was, 'Lord Mahavira confided his experiences with the primitives to Gautam and Sudharma in great detail. They reduced this narration to epigrams. I incorporated these terse utterances unaltered into the canonical texts.'

'Were you unaware of the detailed incidents?'

'I was aware.'

'Why then, did you barely allude to these events of the Lord's life?'

'Nothing better could be done. You won't realise my difficulties. Whatever could be scribed in the circumstances was good enough.'

Without allowing any digression into the alleged difficulties I resumed the main theme.

'Shall I be granted replies to a few queries of mine?'

'You will be.'

I put forth one query at a time.

'How many times did the Lord visit the primitive areas?'

'Only twice.'

'When was it so?'

'First during the fifth year of his pursuits and last during the ninth one.'[1]

'Which areas did he bless with his visit?'

'He visited Vajrabhumi and Sumhabhumi in Lat province.'[2]

'Where would he reside?'

'In caves, in dilapidated structures and also under a tree.'

'It must have been an uncomfortable experience.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. pp. 290, 296.

[2] 'Ayaro' 9/3/2.

'Least comfortable. These are mountainous regions. The three seasons of winter, summer and rain are at their intensest there.'

'Did the Lord witness all the three seasons there?'

Initially it was winter when the Lord went there. During the second visit the summer and the rains, both, welcomed him there.'

'Was the first sojourn briefer than the subsequent one?'

'The later sojourn lasted six months while in the earlier one only two to three months were spent.'[1]

'How did the tribals receive him?'

'There were few cows and those ones also almost dry. They did not grow cotton. Straw served as their covering.'

'Their food was dry as they had no butter or oil. The breakfast consisted of sour juices and cold rice. Adding salt to it was not favoured amongst them. The lunch consisted of dry rice and meat. The dry meals made them irritable. For the merest excuse they would bitterly quarrel. Garrulousness was in their blood.[2] Once the Lord walked along to a village. The villagers distrusted him. They said "You nude fellow! What brings you here? Turn back and go. "The Lord turned back.'[3]

'On another occasion they offered him no shelter and he returned to the jungle to stay under a tree.[4]

'Excuse me my interruption. When the Lord sought isolation why should he visit human habitation.?'

'The Lord would visit the villages for his meals and water. During the six months' sojourn he sought a shelter for the rainy season but to no avail. He passed the inclement season wandering and staying under the trees.[5] Sometimes the displeased villagers caused physical injuries to him.

---

[1] 'Acharangachurni' pp. 319; 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp.296; 'Acharangavrithi' pp. 282.

[2] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 290.

[3] Ibid pp. 320.

[4] 'Ayaro' 9/3/8; 'Acharangachurni' pp. 319.

[5] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 296.

'They did not grow sesamum there.'

'Did not the beasts trouble him there?'

'I have no knowledge of his coming across any wild beast like lion or tiger but the wild dogs did pester him. The dogs there were peculiarly ferocious. Even a stick would not deter them. The Lord had neither a stick nor a rod to scare them away. The canine pack would surround him and bite. Some rogues would call the beasts and set them after him with a "shoo..." When the latter pounced upon him the ruffians would dance with pleasure. A few happened to be gentle. They would interpose and drive away the dogs.[1]

'Once the Lord faced the sun, standing. A few primitives arrived there. They confronted him.'

'The Lord did not feel inclined to glance at them. His aloofness was intolerable. They booed him and spat over him. The Lord was placid as a statue. They wondered—"What a being! We spat and he refuses to be provoked."

"See how I provoke him," Said another.

'He took a pinch of dust. The Lord's eyes were half open. He threw sand into these. The Lord would neither lower the eye-lids nor show any signs of provocation. It was a fiasco for the mischievous rustic. He hit the Lord with his angry fists. And still the Lord was unmoved. Then he threw stones and later bones. At last he pierced him with a lance. The watchers were shouting. The Lord was mute and placid. He, on the other hand, reflected contentment. The irate man was tired of the whole business. 'Let's go," he said, "if he were a human being he would certainly have been provoked."[2]

'Once the Lord was meditating in a mountainous valley. He squatted in the lotus posture. A few labourers were going to the jungle to work. They saw the Lord sitting there. Never had they seen a man sitting this wise. Their curiosity detained them there for an hour. The Lord was as fixed as ever. It was so astonishing. Is he from human species or some other creature? A man advanced further. He knocked the Lord down. The Lord regained his sitting meditative posture. At heart they were rather humane. The tranquility of the Lord pacified them. They drew near and bent down in respect at his feet to expiate.[1]

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/3/36.

[2] 'Ayaro' 9/3/10-11; 'Acharangachurni' pp. 320

' "Forgive us, sire. How unscrupulous have we been in our behaviour!" '

'Did the Lord converse with the tribals?'

'He would not talk avidly. His interests shrank from all objects and centred round the quest of truth. Finding a stranger amongst themselves, people would cluster around him. They would question his identity.

'I am a monk.'

'Where do you hail from?'

'I have come from Vaishali.'

'Pray, what happens to be the purpose of your visit?'

'To be with myself in absolute loneliness.'

'The Lord would lapse into silence after replying to a couple of questions. The spectators would watch him with great interest. Then another inquisitive group would arrive. They would ironically comment. "What a combination of the nude and the ill-clad."[2]

'What was the reaction of the Lord on the rudeness of the primitives?'

'The Lord was the epitome of wisdom. He knew that a poor tends to be indecorous and unruly. Hence the primitives ceased to shock him by their conduct! He was a repository of non-violence. His feelings were enlivened with good-will and fellow-feeling. He eyed man in his peculiar perspective. This vision was not subject to the other man's behaviour. Hence his heart was as much bubbling with love for the primitives as for other creatures.'

'Long sojourn and uncomfortable journeys must have pained him at times.'

'It was never so. His countenance was ever refulgent.'

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/3/12; 'Acharangachurni' pp. 320.

[2] 'Acharangachurni' pp. 320.

'Is not cheerfulness a consequence of favourable circumstances?'

'I find it difficult to deny it and equally difficult to endorse that cheerfulness has everything to do with the circumstances attending upon the subject. A cheerfulness generated by favourable set-up will crumble down with the advent of an unfavourable one. However, the cheerfulness earned by a transcendental wisdom is never subject to the vagaries of circumstances.'

'How did the Lord suffer so much of inflictions and penances?'

'A man swam in the ocean. Another watched him from the beach. The swimmer dived and the watcher wondered how he could bear the tremendous weight of the watery sheets. He did not know that the upthurst makes it so easy for a body to dive in free water. A pitcher of water alone oppresses one with weight. It is the oppression of the bondage. A consciousness confined in bodily pitcher suffers pain. During meditation it is as free as the ocean waves. The sufferings of body cease to count. It is when you watch aground the waters of meditation without delving into these that you comment on the bodily severities of the Lord.'

The rational explanation brought my feet down to the rock-bottom of reality. The grandeur of the genius of meditation came home to me afloat like a verse :

The marrow-chilling whirl.
The fury-fired fumes.
Have access there none.
Nor tumult there consumes,
The blissful holiness
In meditation rules.

The resounding verses swept away my remnant doubts.

8

Am I not a Mighty Emperor

Pusya was the greatest astrologer of the day.[1] His predictions were marvellous. People from remote places called on him for consultation. He was conscious of his lasting fame. Once he happened to loiter along the bank of the Ganges. There he observed the fresh imprint of certain feet. He was struck by the astrological marks.

'Who could be the owner of these rare feet?' He repeatedly said to himself. 'Whosoever he be, he cannot be an ordinary being. He cannot be a common monarch. These are the marks of an emperor who rules a vast empire. If he is an emperor how be it that his retinue is singularly absent as far as the foot-prints disclose? Is it a hallucination?' He could not reconcile himself with the situation.

He settled near the imprints to study them minutely. He inferred that it was no hallucination. He argued with himself—If the science be correct and I have learnt as a sincere pupil the man ought to be a great emperor. If it be otherwise, astrology is no science. I would condemn the books to the waves of the Ganges and pronounce that my master taught me a pseudo-science.

Following the foot-prints he came to the vicinity of Sthunak. He found a sadhu meditating in his standing posture. Evidently the imprints were caused by this monk. He stood before him watching the figure. He cast a meaningful glance from feet upwards. He was all the more perplexed. His physiognomy indicated him to be a mighty emperor and the circumstances were of an ambulating mendicant. It was all very confusing. The Lord came out of himself. Pusya bowed and said—'How be it that you are alone my Lord?'

---

[1] Second year of the pursuit at Thunak.

'Each of us comes here alone.'

So do we when we go herefrom.'

'I don't discuss metaphysics, sire, 'talk like a realist.'

'Am I really alone?'

'Are you not alone my Lord when you have discarded your kins?'

'I carry my kins with myself. Absolute self-absorption is my father. Non-violence is my mother. Continence is my brother. Non-attachment is my sister. Peace is my consort. Compassion is my daughter. Tranquility is my home. Truth is my company. I am ever with my family. How can I be called alone?'

'Sire! Confuse me not with a quiz. I submit to you my enigma. Pray solve it. Your features reveal that you ought to be an emperor, while your circumstances declare you to be a commoner. I am faced with the worst dilemma of my life. The knowledge of a life-time is at stake. My life itself is at stake. It is not an ordinary problem that is posed before me.'

'Who is an emperor Pusya?'

'The one who is led by the regal wheel.'

'Who is an emperor?'

'The one who owns the royal umbrella granting protection to an army occupying an area of twelve *Yojanas*+.

'Who is an emperor?'

'The one who owns the miraculous drill, seed sown by which ripens in a day.'

'Pusya, see for yourself above, below and in transverse directions and you will see myself led by the wheel of Dharma. Conduct is my regal umbrella that has the virtue to protect

---

+ *Yojana* is twenty-four miles.

the entire humanity. Moral awareness is my drill the seed own by which ripens in a jiffy. Am I not an emperor? Does your astrology not mention a spiritual emperor?'

'I am more than satisfied before I leave you my Lord.'

The Lord left for Rajgriha. Pusya returned wherefrom he came.[1]

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 281, 282.

9

The Protective Shield of Meditation

The spiritual empire of the Lord is coming into its own. His campaign for emancipation gradually gathers momentum. An emperor conquers others to be triumphant. His liberty is earned by putting another in fetters. A spiritual emperor does not believe in the like conduct. His triumph is not built on another's defeat nor his liberty on another's slavery.

Mahavira's conquests grow not on an individual but on sleep, hunger and bodily restiveness.

Mahavira triumphs not an individual but his own ego, his own possessive instincts and mental agitativeness.

THE CONQUEST ON SLEEP :

Sleep is essential for life. Biology would prescribe a sleep of six hours for Mahavira. But he defies this principle. For months on an end he keeps waking. There is one mission in life-to meditate, meditate, meditate with no respite. During waking the man is alert externally and inert inwardly. In slumber the man is neither fully awake nor asleep. In sound sleep the man is asleep inwardly as well as outwardly.

In profound self-awareness the man is asleep in appearance and awake inwardly. In this phase one sees vividly the dreams of the accumulated impressions or latencies.

In profound self-absorption the man appears asleep but stays awake at heart. The mind is tranquil, then, and free from thoughts. Mahavira would either remain in the transcendental awareness or profound awareness of the self. No sooner had he been initiated than he transcended the waking slumber and sleep.

Prabuddha asked, 'It is believed that Mahavira slept in all for forty-eight minutes during twelve and a half year. Is it true?'

'I was not a witness to it. How can I endorse it? But since I did not witness him how would I controvert it?'

'Is perception the only source of knowledge?'

'It is not so.'

'Then why side-track my question with this argument? Is there no means to know the truth?'

'There is. 'Acharanga Sutra' is an authentic scripture on the issue.'

'Does it record that the Lord slept in all for forty-eight minutes?'

'No, it does not do so.'

'What is recorded therein, then?'

'Therein it is recorded that the Lord would not sleep frequently. Nor would he sleep for long. He would keep the soul waking most of the time.'[1]

'Is sleep not indispensable to life?'

'It is. That's why the Lord would sleep a wink after prolonged waking.'[2]

'Would not the sleep pester him?'

'Once a while during summer and pre-spring seasons. Once the sleep bothered him seriously at night. He then slept for an instant. He resumed his meditation thereafter.'[3]

'Sleep is needed for four reasons—exhaustion, concentration, emptiness and utter relaxation. When the Lord practised concentration and relaxations how could he have immunised himself from sleep?'

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/2/5.

[2] Ibid

[3] 'Acharangachurni' pp. 313.

'The irrepressible urge to realise the self enlivened his concentration and relaxation. That's why he was immune from sleep.'

'Did the Lord conquer sleep with meditation or did he compliment the latter with the former?'

'The Lord meditated standing. Sometime he would walk awhile. By these means he could vanquish sleep. His meals were sparing. He would perform meditation in the *kayotsarge* posture or the posture of dedication. Hence sleep would not easily bother him. The repose resulting from spontaneous meditation would render sleep superfluous what to say of complimenting it.'

'Is any incident connected with the Lord's dream-activity extant?'

'Why not?'

'Then let me know about it.'

'The Lord was meditating in the Chaitya of Shulapani-yaksa.[1] In the small hours of the night (48 minutes before the down) the Lord fell asleep. During this sleep he dreamt ten dreams—.

1. The evil spirit of the tank is defeated.
2. The large white winged male *koel* bird.
3. The particoloured male *koel.*
4. Two necklaces of jewels.
5. The herd of white cows.
6. Blooming lotus-pond.
7. The rolling ocean has been crossed by swimming with strokes of hands.
8. Sun in full refulgence.
9. *Meru* mountain entwined with his intestines.
10. His own presence upon the throne hinged upon the pivot of the golden *Meru* mountain.

On witnessing these dreams the Lord woke up.[2]

---

[1] First year of pursuits at Asthikgram (initially known as Vardhman village).

[2] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 274.

'Are the experiences of witnessing one's latencies extant?'

'It occurred more than once. You have come across the tale of Shulapaniyaksa. Do not the tales of Kataputana Vyantari and Sangamdeo reveal such projection of one's accumulated impressions?'

It is the fifth year of the spiritual practices. The Lord is going from the camp Gramak to Salisirsha. There is a garden on the outskirts. The Lord fell into meditation there. It was the month of Magh. The chill was extreme. The sky was fogged. The air was astir. Each creature craved for warmth and heat.

The Lord is unclothed. His will and yogic powers kept him stood unmoving. In that chill A *vyantari* came there. She was called Kataputana. The sight of the Lord provoked her. She assumed the looks of a wandering abbess. She wetted her flowing tresses and sprayed it on the Lord. The Lord was imperturbable. The Lord thereby won the transcendental virtue of knowing every tangible mundane object.[1]

The Lord is incessantly progressing. The path is not unchequered. How can one move unimpeded here where rivalries prevail? The level ground, the ditch and the hillocks punctuate every long track. But one with unshaky legs moves on unimpeded. He accomplishes the journey through.

During the eighth year of his practices the accumulated impressions blew up irrepressibly. It happened when he meditated in the Salvana grove of Bahusalaka village. The alertness of the Lord calmed the storm in no time.

During the eleventh year of the practices the accumulated force of past inclinations re-exploded. This was the last attack of its kind. The Lord had been ruthlessly smashing the gathered up force of proclivities and impressions. Hence these elements also asserted themselves for their survival.

It is the Pedhal village, to be specific, the grove of Pedhal. The temple is called Poulas. He observed fast for three days. The Lord stands slightly stooping, over a rock. It was his favourite posture of dedication. The concentration is intensified.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 292, 293.

The two hands touch the knees. The eyes are fixed on the aim. It is the dark of night-pitch dark of the deepest kind.

The Lord feels that the doomsday has arrived. It is a dust storm. Each part of the body is dust-filled. How oppressing is the experience! The Lord was unruffled. Now the dust storm is over and the ants with sharp stings bite him. The Lord is still unmoved.

The moment the ants had done, the mosquitoes swarmed the air. The sharp pricks puncture every pore and blood oozes everywhere.

The moment the mosquitoes spare him, white ants make him their food. Scorpions follow next. Then come mongooses, snakes, rodents, elephants and tigers. How long would the monsters be behind? But each species of pests went as fast as it came, defeated in its purpose.

Then the suppressed urges, the latencies, disguised themselves. Cruelty masked itself with compassion. Simultaneously, Trishala and Siddhartha stood face to face before him and expostualated with him, 'What led you Kumar to desert us in our old age? Turn homeward, come and see how miserable we are without you.' Their piteous petitions failed to melt him.

In the wake of their disappearance a divine damsel faced him. Her alluring gestures and lascivious suggestions were the wavelets that vibrated the air. Her provocative, gait and flirtatious smile ravished the atmosphere. The minute bells of her anklets would set any romantic heart aflame. The Lord however was untouched by it.

Many such ordeals appeared and were gone as fast. The shield of meditation of the Lord was so impenetrable that the darts were bent back. His spiritualism was so chaste and inviolate that no adversity could damage it. At last the clouds were cleared. The azure sky is bright like a crystal and the laughing rays of the new sun broadcast the final victory.[1]

---

1. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 304-305.

THE CONQUEST OF HUNGER :

Lord Mahavira is signified by his prolonged austerities. He did penances for fairly long durations. For twelve and a half year plus a fortnight he practised austerities. A regular table of his austerities has been drawn :

* Two days' fast	12 times.
* Three days' fast	229 times.
* A fortnight's fast	72 times.
* One month's fast	12 times.
* A month and a half's fast	Twice.
* Two months' fast	6 times.
* Two and a half month's fast	Twice.
* Three months' fast	Twice.
* Four months' fast	9 times.
* Five months and twenty-five days' fast	Once.
* Six months' fast	Once.
* *Bhadrapratima* two fasts	Once.
* *Mahabhadrapratima* four fasts	Once.
* *Sarvatobhadrapratima* ten fasts	Once.

During this spiritual practice of twelve and a half year he observed fast during 350 days in all and the eating never included consecutive days. He never took water during his fast and never observed less than two days fast at a time.[1]

'The Lord's austerities included the twin practices of fasting and meditation. We have drawn an image of the Lord in his fasting aspect only and ignored to visualise his meditative aspect. That's why the masses remember him more as one devoted to ceaseless austerities than one absorbed in meditation.'

'When the Lord was so deeply absorbed into himself what necessitated observing prolonged fasts?'

'There were two contemporary schools of thought. Some of the philosophers held body and consciousness to be inseparable, while others held the two to be different entities.

---

1. 'Awashyakniyukti' Dipika letter 107, 108.

Mahavira held the two separate and experimented accordingly. He aimed at demonstrating the ascending order of inherent strength of gross body, subtle body, mind and soul respectively. His prolonged austerities were a part of that experiment.

'It is a common belief that if food and drink are denied to man his days are counted and if respiration is denied it's a matter of seconds. But by doing without food and drink for six months the Lord demonstrated that the proximity of self renders the bodily needs nominal. Sleep, hunger, thirst and respiration lose the significance we grant them.'

'Should I, then, infer that the Lord suffered from anorexia or loss of appetite.'

'No. When he suffered from no ailment how can one infer such a wild conclusion?'

'In that case should I think that he subdued his appetites for food and drink.'

'That again is no correct reasoning.'

'How should we interpret the phenomenon then?'

'He would be so much self-absorbed that his hunger and thirst grew imperceptible.'

'Is it feasible?'

'And why not? It is the experience of Patanjali himself that *samyam* or concentration on the gullet *(kanthakoop)* dispenses with hunger and thirst.'

'What do we mean by the term *Kantha.*'

'Below the tongue there is a vein. If one traces it down the throat one comes across the gullet or *Kanthakoop.*'

'Pray, what is *Samyam* or concentration?'

'It is the threefold activity of *dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi* or concentration *par excellence.* The one who concentrates on his gullet in these three successively emerging higher degrees of contemplation gets over the urges of hunger and thirst.'

The Lord never sought to torture the body by suppressing his physical needs of hunger and thirst. In fact, by his intense concentration these needs were reduced to the minimum.

THE CONQUEST OF PALATE :

The Lord was very cautious about his food. He would take just the right quantity for survival. People eat sparingly when indisposed. The Lord was fit and still he ate very little. The three limbs of his conquest of hunger were less frequency of meals, limited quantity and a limited gamut of food articles.

'Did he experiment in conquering the taste?'

'The Lord experimented to effect equanimity in all the walks. He did so regarding his meals. His experiments to conquer the palate are in accordance with these austerities.'

'Did he shun all delicious food?'

'No, he did not. The very next day after his initiation the Lord left Kamargram and reached Kollag. A Brahmin named Bahul lived there. The Lord visited his place. He offered the Lord rice boiled in milk with butter and cane sugar.'[1]

The Lord was travelling in the north of Vachala.[2] A householder Nagasena lived there. He served the Lord with a dish of rice boiled in milk.[3]

'Did he never take flat tasteless food?'

'He did. He visited Brahmin village coming from Suwarnakhal.[4] It had two parts. Nanda and Upnanda were two brothers. One part of the village was owned by Nanda and the other by Upnanda. The Lord came to Nanda's portion where he was offered stale rice.

'At Vanijyagram a householder Ananda had a female cook called Bahula. She was going out to throw away stale rice. Seeing the Lord there she apologetically said, "The food is still not cooked, my Lord. Here I carry rice kept overnight. Pray, accept it if you will." The Lord held out his hand. She offered him the stale rice.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 270.

[2] Second year of pursuit.

[3] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 279.

[4] Third year of pursuit.

The Lord had cultivated equanimity so intensely that he would take the food that would be offered to him dispassionately. Some time it was a delectable dish, another time a flat one. Some time it was stale food, another time warm and fresh. Some time it was an unappetizing dish of Kulmash, Bakkas and Pulak[+] and another time a sumptuous treat like rice boiled in milk. But his equanimity was susceptible to neither.

Once the Lord switched over to dry food. During these experiments he subsisted on *Kodu* porridge, berry powder and Kulmash. The experiment lasted for eight months. The palate was left to itself. Earlier the mind was wont to interfere with it. Now it had been rendered free of the mental interference.

[+] Coarse mind of cereals.

10

Meditation, Yogic Postures and Silence

I was on the verge of gliding into the inner realms of concentration. The hold of the gross world had gone. My aim was to realize the intensity of Mahavira's concentration and meditation. I tuned myself to the subtle world and held a communion with Acharya Kundkund. I queried. 'You sage! Your dictum is that one ignorant of palatal discipline, sleep-control and posture-control is ignorant of Mahavira and ignorant of his *dharma.* Does not Mahavira's *dharma* admit of meditation?

The Master said with a smile, 'If meditation were irrelevant whatfor the travail of disciplining the tongue, sleep and posture?'

'Worthy sire! That arouses my doubt why your table excludes the otherwise significant-meditation.'

'How could I think of neglecting meditation?'

'Why don't you, then, mention meditation in your regimen?'

'The suggested regimen is only a means to meditation. What for should I expressly mention meditation?'

'Is not meditation a means only?'

'It is a means but with a difference. A conquest of hunger, sleep and posture is a means of means.

'How be it?'

'Meditation is a means of self-realization. A subduing of the faculties of hunger, sleep and posture is a means of meditation. The Lord practised the regimen with the sole motive of mastering ceaseless meditation.'

'Sire, permit me to express one more doubt that harrows me.'

'Please do.'

'You have interpreted Mahavira's meditation as a vision of the self. Does the term not imply a vision of the truth?'

'Are self-realization and truth-realization different?'

'Mahavira has propounded the existence of two kinds of matter *(dravyas)* conscious and unconcious. In the realisation of truth both the entities are witnessed, while in the realization of self only the conscious is witnessed. How the two are identical then?'

'You could not grasp the implication. He alone realises the unconscious whose conscious has been unravelled and this unravelling of the conscious results from merging the mind in the conscious. Hence when I say Mahavira's meditation I mean the realisation of the self or the realisation of the source of the mind.'

I expressed my gratitude and reverted to my own mind. It occurred to me to expound the meditative genius of Mahavira to them who have been emphasising his austere genius exclusively.

After his initiation Mahavira's first halt was at Karmargram.

Meditation manifested itself first there and evolved gradually to be consummated in the final enlightenment.[1]

Some of the spiritualists insisted on particular postures to attain meditation. Mahavira harboured no such prejudices. He used to sit erect with a slight stoop. Sometimes he would meditate sitting while at other times standing.

He had a preference for the standing posture. He found relaxation to be absolutely necessary for meditation, hence he adopted the posture of dedication whether he stood or sat. He would quieten all physical, ligual and mental activity but for some feeble respiration.[1] Some spiritualists emphasise particular hours of the day suitable for meditation, Mahavira was not bound by such self-imposed restrictions. Most of his time was spent in meditation. Neither he had to study scriptures nor preach. His aim was to experience and realise. Unlike a cowherd serving his master by grazing the latter's kine, to bring them to his home punctually that the master might be benefitted by their milk in the evening, he was the cowherd, the master and all who himself milked the cattle for his own good.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 268.

Mahavira would concentrate on an object or meditate without an object. He would concentrate upon a spot on wall. He used to fix his glance on a wall for three hours on an end. Such a Yogic exercise lent an unusual magnetism to his eyes besides helping in the concentration of his mind. During the evolutionary phase of meditation his visual exercise of unwinked stare would last for hours.[2]

Once the Lord visited the province of Dridhabhumi.[3] The village was called Pedhala and the temple Poulas. Here he practised *Ek ratriki Pratima.* First he observed a three day fast. During the third night he stood in a posture of dedication. The two feet clung to each other and the arms swung clinging to the legs. The eyes were open and unwinking. He had fixed the eyes to a spot, the senses shrinking to their respective seats. He lost himself in meditation.[4]

It's an excellent practice to get rid of fear and body-consciousness. The devotee sinks to the profoundest depths of concentration with the resultant uphaeval of past impressions. The one who stays unstirred in the face of such a commotion wins direct realisation. The one who succumbs to the tempestuous gale suffers dementia or some grave malady or

---

1. Ibid pp. 301.
2. 'Ayaro' 9/1/5. : 'Acharangachurni' pp. 300, 301.
3. Eleventh year of pursuit.
4. 'Awashyakniryukti', Theme 498; 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 301.

failure in the ultimate spiritual mission. The Lord ascended this fatal mountain-top no less than a dozen times.

It was the eleventh year of his spiritual pursuit. The Lord camped at Sanulatthiya village. Here he practised *Bhadrapratima.* He stood in the posture of dedication facing last. For full twelve hours he stood meditating. Similarly, he spent as much time meditating facing north, west and south, each. He found this method of meditating particularly satisfying. He dovetailed this practice into *Mahabhadrapratima,* meditating diurnally facing each of the four direction.

The meditation was too intense to be interrupted. He stepped up the practice to *Sarvatobhadrapratima*, which consisted of meditating for a day and night facing the ten direction East, South-east, South, South-west, North-west, North, North-east, upwards and downwards for a day and night each.

The Lord thus spent sixteen days and nights in these practices.

The Lord meditated upon upward direction, downward direction and transverse directions during these practices. To have a vision of the matter (*dravyas)* in the higher worlds he meditated facing upward. For having a vision of the nether worlds he directed his attention downwards. For realizing what matter existed in the transverse direction he fixed his attention in transverse directions. He would change the targets of his attention also.[1]

The chief targets were :[2]

1. The Karmas existing upwards, downwards and transversewards.
2. Bondage, the causes of bondage and its consequence.
3. *Moksha* its causes and its pleasure.
4. Head, navel and toe.
5. Matter, characteristics and modes.
6. The lasting and the transitory.

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/4/14.

[2] 'Acharangachurni' p. 324.

7. The gross world in the cosmos.
8. Microcosm, the atom.
9. Realisation of the self by means of higher intellect.

The Lord would assume certain *bhavanas*—feelings in the intercessions of meditation. The *bhavanas* he would assume were :—

1. Unity. All the combinations are incidental. The final truth is that the self is the only one.
2. The transitoriness. All combinations result in separation. Hence all combinations are transitory.
3. Unsheltered existence :—

That the good or evil accumulated impressions of the individual render him happy or unhappy. Once the evil accumulations manifest themselves there is no help but to suffer pain.

The Lord preferred isolation for meditation. He would either stand or sit to meditate. The postures he adopted for meditation were mainly. *Padmasan, Paryankasan, Virasan, Godohika* and *Utkatika.*+

The Lord attained the highest categories of meditation in due course. For lengthy periods he would concentrate on the body. When tired he would concentrate on vocal or mental activity. He concentrated on the matter and then shift to its modes. He would concentrate on one word and afterwards on another.

From the meditation of shifting targets he accomplished the meditation of non-shifting target.

Having attained these heights of meditation he would ceaselessly and exclusively meditate in the manner he was engaged in, whether bodily, verbal or mental. He would fix his attention on the matter or its mode. He would not change the word. Subsequently he rose above this stage to transcend the phase of tranquility.

+ Various postures vide 'Acharangachurni' p. 324; 'Acharangavrithi letter 283.

The meditative facet of the Lord's character drew the attention of many aspirants of meditation including Acharya Hem Chandra. He writes :—
"Oh Lord ! Your meditative posture of lying in paryankasan, absolutely relaxed with sight fixed upon the nasal tip presents spiritual pursuit *par excellence.* It will serve as a model to aspirants for all times to come.'

The Lord had already taken a vow to observe silence in large measure. An experience in the intensities of meditation reveals the subleties of this practice. The expression of thoughts through speech and the vibrations in the mind go hand in hand. To be mute is to render the mind mute. A new rationale came home to the Lord—That which is visible to me is mute and that which is voiced is invisible. Whom to speak then? His voice is wafted into the mist of this rationale to fuse with muteness. The Lord is not subject to the speaking urge : It is the latter which is subject to his will. He speaks wisely and sparingly only when opportune. If somebody questions him he answers concisely. The rest of the period is unsullied by communication.

11

In the Lap of Conducive Discomforts

Water gives birth to lotus. It is the wind that spreads its fragrance. It is the sensitive soul that perceives the fragrance. Each performs its share of labour to accomplish the task—the perception of the scent.

(1) The Lord prepared himself for the initiation. The members of his famlly bathed him with fragrant water. Then his person was scented. Some applied *Goshirsha* sandal, some scented powders and some others *patwas* (a kind of scented powder). There emanated sweet fragrance from the Lord.

The black-bees awoke to the scent. They averted themselves from the wild flowers and lotus groves to hover over the Lord's person. They circled round him and buzzed. The quietude of the grove was vibrant with their melody. The black-bees perched over the Lord. They found no nectar there. They flew away. The lure of the fragrance again drew them and a failure to find nectar drove them away once more. Irritated by this chain of failures they bit the Lord.[1]

(2) The Lord went to Karmargram. Some youths were attracted by the fragrance of the Lord. They found an opportunity to question him. How to prepare the scented powder, Prince, that you have applied to yourself? The Lord deigned

---

[1] 'Acharangachurni' p. 299; 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 268, 269.

it proper not to respond and the youth, infuriated, called him names.[1]

(3) The body of the Lord was shapely, well-built and handsome. His curly hair charmed everyone. His eyes resembled a blooming blue lotus. His grace maddened the maidens. During one night three damsels visited him. One of them said, 'Who is your consort Kumar? Is it a Brahmin female, or Ksatriya or Vaisya or Shudra?

'None.'

'Would you choose one of us? Whom will you?

'None.'

'What a youth to spurn us?'

Said the second beauty 'we should probe and see whether he is masculine or not.'

The third said, 'I fear he is a eunuch. If he were a male why would he discard us?'

The three appealed in one voice—'Kumar, you are still young. Why waste away this youth like a flower in an unfrequented jungle? It appears your charms were shaped by the nature's plenty but your family did not please you. That leads you discard it to wander alone. We propose to dedicate all that we own for your sake. Why alas, this waxen ball does melt in this heat of temptation?'

The lascivious gestures, wanton actions and intoxication of the vixens grew wild. They spared nothing to seduce him and still the Lord was unmoved.[2]

The Lord meditated in all the threefold methods—upward, downward and transverse. By upward meditation he had sublimated his libido. The worst temptation least aroused him. As if an impassable vast gulf had obstructed his way which he successfuly crossed, thanks to his ferry of meditation.

A ball of earth grows red-hot in fire but it does not melt.

(4) Syamak is the celebrated virtuoso of Veena of Vaishali. He is tuning his Veena to play upon it. The Lord arrived at

---

1. 'Acharangachurni' p. 300. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 269.
2. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 269, 310.

Vaishali from his last camp at Siddharthpur. Seeing the Lord, Syamak said, 'My Lord! I begin my performance on Veena. What a happy coincidence that you grace this spot. Pray, tarry a little so that I play it to you. Let me show you my virtuosity in music and arts.'

The Lord showed no deference to the prayer. He walked onwards.

One interpretation is that the Lord cold-shouldered him since he was dry-as-dust and had no sentiments for fine arts and the artist's finesse.[1] The alternative view is that he was suffused with the music of the planets that flooded his soul and had no desire for the lilting harmonies of an earthly Veena.

(5) The stage of Shravasti is crowded. The king has ordered a drama.[2] The troupe is said to be superb. The chief of the troupe has learnt of the Lord's presence. He entreated him to grace the theatre. The Lord declined. Said the actor, 'Are you not keen to witness a play?'

'No.'

'Don't the plays entertain you?'

'Well, it's a question of one's liking.'

'Can there be two opinions about fine arts.'

'There is nothing that does not admit of a diversity of opinion.'

'The obtuse minds might suffer such a bewildering diversity. You are a sage.'

'The sage has no respite from his probe of truth. He watches the rhythmic dance in every iota of nature. Each of the paricles presents to him the rhythm, the vibration, the dynamism. His suffusion with melody leaves nothing unmelodious for him. A scholar of scriptures is never freed of perplexities. A knower of the self apperceives the ginger of life. A donkey labours under the load of sandal but the prosperous man enjoys its cool perfume.'

The artist bowed his head in humility and respectfully parted to attend to his vocation.

---

1. 'Acharangachurni' p. 303
2. Ibid p. 303.

12

The Image and the Reflection

A king invited five theologians and said, 'I wish to adopt a preceptor for myself. But he alone shall be my master who keeps the largest hermitage.'

The king went about inspecting the hermitages. The first one occupied an area of five acres, the next ten, the third twenty and the fourth forty acres. Having inspected the four ones he accompanied the old master of the fifth and the last hermitage to the outskirts of the town under a tree. To quell the curiosity of the king the master said—

'Here lies my hermitage.'

'How far does it extend, Sir?'

As far as your vision extends and further beyond it.'

It being the most extensive hermitage, he was chosen the king's preceptor.

He caressed the mother-earth externally and his self internally. Outwardly he observed the human beliefs and inwardly the perennial truths.

The contemporary people were the staunch believers in omens. Outlaws also subscribed to this dogma. An ill-omen would deter a robber from thieving.

(1) Purnakalash was a border village of Radh province. The Lord leaves it *en route* to Magadha.[1] He came across two robbers. They were going to commit theft in primitive areas.

---

[1] Fifth year of pursuit.

The sight of the Lord angered them. They drew near him and ventilated their wrath by hurling abuses on him. They said—

'You nude and bald-headed *shramana I* You have defeated our purpose today.'

'How did I defeat it?'

'We proposed to leave for theft. Your appearance has marred our chances.'

'Theft is too ignoble an act to begin auspiciously?!'

The two were chanting 'theft is ignoble—theft is ignoble,' unaware of themselves as if under a spell.

The Lord proceeded onwards, having deflated the blind-beliefs of the day.[1]

(2) At Vaishali also the Lord bore the brunt of blind-beliefs.[2] He was meditating, standing in a blacksmith's workshop. It was after a period of six months on sick-bed that the convalescent artisan was visiting the place with his tools. He saw to his dismay a naked mendicant. It was too bad an omen to resume work in the presence of a beggar. Seething with anger he took his employees to task—

'Who allowed this naked medicant shelter here?'

'We did it', said they.

'I don't relish it.'

'But we do.'

'He should be ejected.'

'That we can't do.'

'Then you are to quit.'

'We won't mind it.'

Seeing the consensus the blacksmith chose to put up with it. He drew nearer and the proximity revolutionised his mentality for ever. He was pacified.[3]

The Lord waged a war against blind-faiths during his tirthankarhood. Was it not a reaction of these particular incidents?'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 290.

[2] Sixth year of the pursuit.

[3] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 292.

(3) The Lord was on way from Vaishali to Vanijyagram.[1] The Gandaki river barred his way. The Lord stood near its bank. A ferry touched the edge. Passengers boarded it. The Lord also boarded it. The ferry set its sail. It reached the other bank. The passengers began to alight. The Lord also landed. The ferrymen collected the fare. One of them demanded the same of the Lord. Wherefrom would the Lord pay his fare? Hence he was detained by the ferrymen. The passengers took to their errands. The Lord stood alone.

After a while the river was alive with the barges carrying soldiers. The soldiers alighted. Their commander saw the Lord. He was prompted to go and bow down to him in the right earnest. 'My Lord, I am the son of Sankharaj's sister. My name is Chit. I have earlier met you with Sankhraj. At the moment I lead this naval caravan on a diplomatic mission. Pray why should you stand here in the scorching sun?'

'I suffer penalty for my fault.'

'What fault, sire?'

'I crossed Gandaki river on a ferry. I should have obtained the consent of the oarsman before boarding it, which I omitted to do.'

'It's no fault. Don't the others do so?'

'They might do it since they have the capacity to pay the fare. I possess nothing to pay. Hence my peccadillo is inexcusable.' Chit eyed the sailors with soldier-like sternness. They trembled with fear. The Lord's mercy was invoked. 'Chit, please abide, Don't threaten them. They are innocent. I made the lapse.'

Chit was pacified. He appeased the sailors. Learning of the Lord's identity they felt a compunction. The Lord's compassion heartily pleased them. The Lord, Chit and the sailors dispersed to go to their respective destination.[2]

---

[1] Tenth year of the pursuit.

[2] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 299.

It was this incident that led the Lord pronounce—'The non-acquisitive shall spare to use another's property without his consent.'

13

The Signs of Progress

Lord Mahavira was still roaming about alone. The attendant or the disciple he had none. To attract a disciple was no achievement for a man of the Lord's calibre. But he would not bind himself with this added responsibility without testing the ultimate freedom.

(1) The master-disciple tradition founded by Lord Parshva still obtains. Some of these saints excel in their high stvtion and its vows and practices and still others have flouted the initiation to become Vedic medicants or live in a household.

Utpal is initiated in the tradition of Parshva. He has mastered numerous subjects of learning. Then he disowned initiation and became a Parivrajaka mendicant. He has settled at Asthikgram. He is a pastmaster in the eight aspects of occultism.

The Lord halts in the Shulapaniyaksa temple.[1] The entire Asthik village resounds with the event of a mendicant choosing it of all the places to halt. They whisper—'It is unfortunate. The miserable saint shall die. Didn't the priest forewarn him? Didn't somebody caution him that a stay overnight there means certain death? How to help now? The night is fairly advanced. Who would dare visit the place now?'

The priest and his companions explained to the people that they had warned the saint. However, the mendicant is nothing if not obstinate. He refused to relent. Who could help him, then?

---

[1] First year of the pursuit at Asthikgram.

Utpal came to know of it. It occurred to him that a common folk could not brave death knowingly. It must be a man of no ordinary virtue. Then he recollected that Lord Mahavira was initiated during the year. He is said to be a man of rare mettle. Could it be that the saint is Mahavira himself? Till late at night they were pre-occupied with this topic. They went to bed still piteously contemplating it. They left their bed earlier than usual. It was day-break when they went to the temple expectant. Some were inquisitive while others had come to be helpful in the anticipated last rites of the sadhu. They entered the door and lo! the medicant had survived. They could hardly rely their eyes. They moved farther to observe. His living state belied their worst misgivings. They bounced with a happy surprise. They raised slogans Shantam Papam Shantam papam. Shantam Papam. Saint, Your grace relieved us of a great calamity. We are freed of all fear now.'

Utpal approached the Lord. He observed the Lord's person. He could clairvoyantly see the last night's occurrence. He understood everything.

'Did you sleep last night, my Lord?'

'I did, Utpal.'

'You dreamt also.'

'I did.'

'You are a great sage, sire.'

'You can interpret these dreams. Still I wish to analyse the dreams for my own benefit.'

Utpal concentrated a bit. He gathered his faculties and said.

1. My Lord! the vision of the defeat of the monster of the pond indicates the waning attachment.
2. The dream of the white male *koel* bird symbolises supernacular unsullied meditation.
3. The particoloured male *koel* stands for the exposition of *Anekantikavada* (relativity).

4. The meaning of fourth dream eludes me, sire.
5. The vision of white cowherd conveys your expanding school of thought.
6. The flowering lotus-pond is a premonition of growing supernal powers.
7. The crossing of the sea is indicative of the crossing over of the sea of life.
8. The vision of sun augurs enlightenment.
9. The dream of a hill girdled with intestines indicates a universal acceptance of your doctrine.
10. Your presence over the top of golden mountain of Meru denotes the installation of *dharma* or moral order on the highest pedestal.'

Said the Lord. 'Utpal, your untuition is highly evolved. Your interpretation of the dreams is precise. The fourth dream of mine wherein I saw two jewel-necklaces represents the accomplishment of *dharma* through the twin means of monastic moral order and householders' moral order.[1]

(2) The Lord crossed the Gandaki river and came to Vanijayagram.[2] Its periphery had a bucolic but unfrequented spot. The Lord chose it for meditation. A householder living in that village was named Ananda. He was a follower of Lord Parshwa. He observed fast for two days at a time and exposed himself to the heat of the sun. These occult practices yielded him extra-sensory-perception.

Learning of the presence of the Lord on the outskirts of Vanijyagram he came to see him. He made obeisance to the Lord and said, 'Matchless is your mastery over the body. Matchless is your control over the mind. I can see for certain the imminence of enlightenment that will descend on you.'[3]

The Lord is nearing enlightenment. The coming event is casting its shadow before.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 273-275.

[2] Tenth year of the pursuit.

[3] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 300

14

The Tireless Fountain of Compassion

Rainy season is on its last lap. Winter is setting in. Greenery is subdued now. The paths are no more rain-blocked. Lord Mahavira left Asthikgram to reach Morak.[1] He as usual chose the grove outside the habitation.

Achchhandakas who were occultists lived there. They were adepts in astrology, hypnotism and other occult practices. One of them was an unchallenged figure in this field in public esteem.

The gardener saw a standing figure pursuing austerities. The next day again it was so. What a venerable man, he felt! He propagated his exalted views amongst the inhabitants. They began to frequent the place. The Lord's meditation and silence continued uninterrupted. And still the people were drawn in growing numbers to do their prayers for a while and go away. The way of the Lord's meditation fascinated them. His proximity blessed them with indefinable peace.

Seeing these devoted masses weaned from his influence, Achchhandak was exasperated. He sought a means to let the Lord down. He appeared near him with his camp-followers.

The Lord was immersed in the deepest self-absorption where success and failure held no relevance. Achchhandak on the other hand, was suffering his unspeakable pangs. Said he, 'You young aspirant! Why do you stand here mutely?

---

[1] Second year of the pursuit.

If you are a sage you have to answer my questions. I hold a straw in my hand. Will it ever break or it shall remain intact?'

The volley of questions failed to have an impact, howsoever little, on the profound meditation of the Lord.

Siddhartha was a devotee of the Lord. For sometime he had been craving his hallowed proximity. He was a man of the highest wisdom. He said, 'Achchhandak, why should his concentration be violated for such a petty question? On the face of it, it merits a plain reply. Let me attempt it. The straw is inanimate. It is devoid of an independent will. If you will to break it, it will be broken, else it will remain inviolate.'

The people present wondered what a man to master such wisdom.

The people present there had to revise their opinion of the seemingly wise man that Achchhandak was. Who would uphold such a man to be a paragon of intellectual attainments? His reputation suffered a total set-back. His plot was to belie whatever the Lord predict regarding the fate of the straw. The defeat of his adversary could be easily brought about by this device. However, the mischief recoiled upon the perpetrator himself before the body of the masses.

Achchhandak still explored an occasion to redeem his honour. One day he found Mahavira standing alone. The latter was not self-absorbed then.

He said, 'You are served everywhere, sire, vast is your glory. I know great beings don't savour to dwarf the weaklings like me. I bank hopes on your kindly patronage, My Lord.'

No sooner had Achchhandak made for the village than the Lord left for Vachala. His compassion did not allow him to stay there for a moment.[1]

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 275-277.

15

A Boating Spree in the Ganges

Who there be that has not suffered a sea change after exposing himself to the Mother Nature? Where change is the lasting truth, resistance to change is certainly a myth.

The Lord practised non-violence and non-possessiveness. He owned no wealth, nor any conveyance. He was the humblest of the humble and hence he resorted to moving about on foot. He was both non-violent and humble hence he chose to ambulate.

The Lord was proceeding towards Surabhipur from Svetavya.[1] The expanse of the Ganges intercepted his way. The Lord witnessed the brisk current between the two banks as the stream of meditation gushing between two thoughts. He ceased to move.

Staying at a place is a prerequisite for concentration. To stay you have to lodge yourself somewhere. But the humble should be homeless and a homeless must keep moving on foot. The moral obligation is to be carried out and hence the Lord awaited the availability of a boat.

Siddhadutta was an expert boatman. His behaviour was as suave as his efficiency commendable. People vied with each other to board his boat for their safety's sake.

Siddhadutta did his cross-river trip and returned to this bank. He saw a divinely austere figure standing. His sight landed on his holy feet. Said he, 'My Lord, grace my boat with

---

1. Second year of the pursuits.

thie holy feet.' Said the Lord, 'Will you take me across the vast expanse of water?' The sailor said, 'Sire, notice the question that I have. Shall you not ferry me across my Lord?'

The Lord kept quiet. His silence was indicative of the need of one's own heroic effort to go across. Let's both help each other, he seemed to imply.

The Lord boarded the ferry. It had many other passengers, one of whom could predict by observing nature. His name was Khemil. The moment they set the sail an owl hooted on the right. Khemil said, 'It is an ill-omen. A tempest is impending.' Other passengers were trembling with fear.

As the ferry touched midstream there was a terrific tempest. The gigantic waves leaped up to the sky. The ferry tossed like a tiny leaf. The rollers rocked them. They apprehended the cold hand of death any moment. And quiet sat the Lord in those moments of fright, motionless and tranquil. He was devoid of an urge to live and he had no scare of death. The one unscared of death is never perturbed by a typhoon.

The tempest passed away as fast as it had arisen. The erstwhile stormy minds of the passengers were also once again quiet. The Lord was at peace with himself as ever. Said Khemil, 'This saint is our saviour today. 'They all bowed their heads to the holy feet. The ferryman said, 'Sire, you have carried my boat through this day. I hope the ferry of my life shall see the other bank solely by your grace.'

The ferry saw the other bank. The passengers took to their destinations. The Lord moved towards Thunak.[1]

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 280, 281.

16

The Liberation from Bondage : The Obligations of Liberation

The events punctuating the Lord's life demonstrate his utter independence of nature and its ways. During the coldest season he would meditate in the shade. During the hottest months he would meditate in the sun. Such experiments of his symbolise the triumph of *Purusa* over *Prakriti* or Nature.

The Lord left Sravasti to halt outside the village Haledduk.[1] There happened to be a large tree called Haledduk under which he stood to meditate. A group of travellers going towards Sravasti passed near by. They camped under the great tree.

It was sun-set. The deepening night and the growing chill. The tree was his roof. It was his courtyard, lodge, clothes and everything. The travellers were not anchorities. They owned beds, blankets, quilts and various other things. And still they trembled under the open sky. They made fire to ward off the cold. All through the night, they warmed themselves with it and left before it was dawn. They left the fire as it was.

The wind grew sharper, fanning the flames of the fire. Goshalak accompanied the Lord. He said, 'Sire, the flames move towards us. Let's leave the place. We will choose another place.' The Lord continued in his meditation. The flames were now licking their bodies. Goshalak receded. There was very little straw left under the tree and it was also not fully dry. Hence the flames grew less keen under the tree. However, they did singe the feet of the Lord.[1]

---

[1] Fifth year of the pursuits.

The Lord experimented variously in the realm of freedom. The bondage of the natural environment had also got to be shaken off. The heat and the cold condition each of us. The Lord sought to flout this bondage once for all.

It was severe winter. The frozen blasts of wind lashed the earth. Some mendicants nestled round the ovens to fight cold. Others scrambled for blankets and felts. Those subscribing to Parshwanath's order also looked around to find out covered houses. The Lord meditated in that ravaging cold under the thatches. Nature attacked him furiously and he was blunting its attack. The duel left him unscourged.[2]

The Science of Discrimination :

When the house was projected on the retina it so seemed that the space is bound. However, when its nature was deciphered it was learnt that the house-walls did not bind the space.

When the lily immersed in water was seen it appeared that it is in touch with the enveloping water. But when its intrinsic nature was interpreted it was learnt that it is intact of water.

When the pitcher, liquour, lid etc. were observed it occurred to us that they are different from the earth. When the nature of the earth was grasped it came home that they don't exist independent of earth.

When the tide was seen in the turbulent sea it seemed that it is aberratic. When its nature was comprehended it was learnt that it is orderly.

When the burnished looks of the noble metal were seen one believed that it is extraordinary. When its nature was probed it was evident that it is no better than common stuff.

---

1. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 288.
2. 'Ayaro' 9/2/13-16; 'Acharangachurni' p. 317; 'Acharangavrith leaves 280, 281.

When boiling water was seen it appeared that heat is an integral part of it. When its nature was understood heat was no more found to be integral to it.

A misapprehension revealed the self to be bound, contiguous, exclusive, aberratic, extraordinary and alloyed. When it's nature was revealed it was known that it is unbound, integral, unique, perennial, universal and unalloyed. The cognition of the nature of self is self itself. It inheres in the body and is still independent of the latter.

Lord Mahavira was an aspirant of emancipation. He had embarked upon his campaign to throw the cribbing conservatism to winds. How, then, could he submit to the sanctions imposed by an extraneous politically sovereign entity? He discovered the sovereign entity in his own person.

Self was his goal. Self was the centre of his meditation. Self was the one who meditated. Again, it was for the sake of self that he meditated. Self was the be all and end all to him. As the oil pervades the sesamum seed, cream the milk and fire the fuel-wood, so the self pervades the body.

The milling separates the oil from the sesamum seeds. The friction makes the fire manifest in the wood. Similarly by means of systematic and discriminative meditation the self is discerned from the body.

Lord Mahavira endeavoured to realise the self by means of discounting and obliterating the body.

The gross body contains the subtle one and the latter the soul.

The Lord would shift the attention from the gross body to the subtle one and thence merge it into the soul.

The soul is abstract, minute and beyond the ken of vision. The Lord would realise it by means of refined wisdom. It is the self that charges the body with consciousness and it is the body that is enlivened with the consciousness The self is the seer and the body the seen. The self is the knower and the body the known. The Lord would be led upto the self pursuing the awareness of its conscious, seer and knower aspect. He would not banish thinking during concentration on the self. To begin with he would discriminate between the self and the body. Once this feeling consolidated he would be absorbed in the conscious aspect of the self. An impure thought breeds another impure thought and a pure one another pure one. On that analogy the Lord meditated on the pure aspect of the self. His meditation flowed like a constant stream of self-realisation.

The Lord wold not seek the warmth of the sun during winter. He would not seek cool shade during summer. He never rubbed his eyes. He would not scratch the itching part of the skin. He neither vomitted nor took laxatives for health's sake. No drug was ever taken. Massaging, oil massaging and bath were never resorted to. In brief, he conferred little care on the body. What is the rationale of it? Some of the scholars explain it away as a means of physical torture to one's self, a sort of masochism. The present biographer holds a different view. Body is no more than an essentially dull weight. Firstly, how will it sense the infliction? Secondly, what good would come out of torturing it? Thirdly, when the body offered no resistance in his spiritual odyssey what would motivate him to excruciate it? The biographer's explanation is that the Lord had gone too far towards self-realisation to defer to the external requirements. The consciousness of physical discomforts had been effaced from its usual effective plane and was directed towards the primaeval fount of consciousness. That explains his indifference to the physical body during his practices.

TANMURTIYOGA :

The Lord effected harmony between the end and the means during meditation. He named it as *Tanmurti.* It is the process of harmonising with the existence in the present instant, refraining from chewing the cud of the past and reverie of the future. He practised such meditation while seemingly engaged in moving about, eating and drinking. While moving he would just move, without thinking, ogling and uttering a word. His body and mind would present a perfect merger.

While eating he would simply eat without perceiving the taste or thinking or speaking.

Disposing of the essential necessities, he would stay as his true self. One can be oneself by devoting exclusively to the action of the present moment. To be his true self the Lord canalised his entire consciousness towards the self. Mind, thought. subtle thought, senses, feelings all flowed to the self-same end.

REALISATION OF THE PURUSHAKAR OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC SELF :

The self is not an object of sight. How then do we witness it? The dilemma is a perennial one and the Lord must have faced it as we do today. He realised that the self pervades the entire body. There is no cell in it that is not permeated with consciousness. *Purusha* is all-pervaded with self. Hence the Lord sought to realise the self in the form of *purusha.* He witnessed self in every part of the body. It went a longway in purging the body-consciousness.

The mind thrives on attachment. Dispassion enables it to shrink to the nucleus of its essence. The Lord by means of dispassion, stopping the influx of karmic matter, spiritual practices and chaste perception, directed the stream of mind to merge into the ocean of consciousness.

17

Worshipped Here : Arrested There

Change is the essence of life. Monotony is a mere fancy of man. The stream of life meanders through hill and dale. Where be such terrain that maintains an even level all along?

(1) The Lord reached Svetavya from Vachala.[1] King Pradeshi made obeisance to the Lord. The latter however would pay deference to the worship he was engaged in rather than the one offered to him by the prince. Hence the worshipful treatment left him untouched. Then he left Svetavya for Surabhipur. He met five princes of Naiyak dynasty. They were on way to see king Pradeshi. On seeing the Lord they alighted from their chariots and left only when they had worshipped hjm.[2]

(2) Once the Lord went to Purimtal town.[3] A trader by caste named Vaggur lived there. Bhadra was his wife. He had worshipped all the deities to seek the blessing of a son, Hitherto the wish had remained unfulfilled. Once the Vaggur couple went to a garden for recreation. There Vaggur saw the ruined temple of *Arhat* Malli. The businessman resolved that in case he be blessed with a son he would reconstruct the temple. It so happened that he begot a son. The temple was restored.

Once the couple was going to the temple to worship the deity. Mahavira was meditating there. A celestial spirit commented on their conduct thus, 'How very strange! The Vaggur couple proposes to worship an idol instead of the living God present before them. The Vaggurs realised their folly. They abandoned the usual worship to devote themselves heart and soul to the Lord.[1]

---

[1] Second year of the pursuit.

[2] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 279-280.

[3] Eighth year of the pursuit.

(3) The Lord left Siddharthpur to reach Vaishali.[2] He stood outside the town in his usual posture of dedication. His sight was fixed upon a spot steadfast. The children came upon the sight and were scared. However, they began to tease him. King Shankh happened to visit the site. He had been a bosom-friend of king Siddhartha. He knew the Lord. He rescued the Lord from this torture. Then he bowed to the Lord and left for his place.[3]

(4) The Lord left Kumarak and reached Chaurak.[4] Robbers were rampant there. The guards there were quite vigilant. None could cross into the country evading their watchful eyes. Seeing the Lord the guards enquired of his identity. The Lord spared to speak. The guards were provoked by such a conduct. Gaushalak accompanied the Lord then. He also abstained from responding to their interrogations. It only incensed them further. They began to torture both. The process of meeting torture with silence continued for quite some time. The inhabitants of the area also witnessed it. The news spread like wild-fire.

Two female roving mendicants lived there. One was Soma and the other Jayanti. They were initiated as nuns in the Parshwa tradition. Having failed to keep up the rigorous saintly conduct, they chose to be contented with life of Vedantic mendicants. They learnt of the excesses perpetrated on the two saints. They learnt of their unresponsiveness to the probing questions of the guards which led to the corporeal punishment. They were prompted to conjecture who these saints

---

1. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 294-295.
2. Tenth year of the pursuits.
3. 'Ayaro' 9/1/5.; 'Awashyakchurni' I pt p. 299.
4. Fourth year of the pursuits.

could be. 'Lord Mahavira is roaming about this region. He is said to be unfalteringly absorbed in his practices. Could it be that one of the two beings is Mahavira?'

The two female mendicants came to the scene of occurrence. They found Lord Mahavira silent and unruffled and the guards violent and trubulent. The guards were performing their stern duty and the Lord suffering in silence.

'Good guards! Treat him not as a thief. He is Lord Mahavira, the illustrious son of Siddhartha. Shall you require any more introduction?' Said the two female mendicants. The guards were taken aback. They had nothing but regret for their reprehensible conduct. Said they,' Venerable mendicants, we are grateful to you. You rescued us from a great moral lapse. No further introduction do we need. We seek your good offices for the purpose.'

They bowed penitent to the Lord's feet. The compassionate, sublime looks of the Lord with the usual tranquil air lifted up the oppressive weight off their conscience.

'My Lord! our guards have shown you disrespect. But the great saints have ever shown indulgence to indiscretions of the fatuous. It is our conviction that you will be merciful to them. We, sire, are two humble sisters of Utpal, the occultist.'

Thus they incidentally revealed their own identity and returned to their abode. The Lord left for his next destination.[1]

(5) Megh and Kalhasti were two brothers. Kalambuka comprised their domain. They were residents of the border territory. Once Kalhasti left with a gang of robbers to commit theft. The Lord was on way to Kalambuka from Chaurak. Goushalak accompanied him.

Kalhasti sought his introduction. The Lord uttered no word. Kalhasti repeated his question with the same results. Goushalak also kept mum. Kalhasti was irritated. He abetted his colleagues to bind them with ropes and commit them before Megha.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 286, 287.

Megha sat in his chamber when the two monks were produced before him. He recognised the Lord and released them.[1]

The repeated arrests of the Lord can be explained on the basis of the contemporary political climate. There existed minor states then. These states constantly manoeuvred to annex one another by fair or foul means. Their spies used to roam about in disguise. This necessitated the police force of every state to be ever vigilant. They kept the border of their state sealed against every outsider.

(6) The guards of Kupiya state put the Lord in custody, taking him to be a spy.[2] The Lord's taciturnity strengthened their suspicion. The event was a household-talk all over the state. Two nuns of Lord Parshwa's tradition lived there. One was called Vijaya and the other Pragalbha. Learning of this incident they visited the place of occurrence. There they disclosed his identity. Consequently the Lord was freed.[3]

(7) Similar was the treatment given to the Lord at Lohargala.[4] The state was unfriendly and hostile with its neighbouring state. Its officers kept a vigil over the visitors from the enemy state. Lord Mahavira and Goushalak visited the place during those days of mounting tension. The guards enquired of their identity. They did not respond. As a result they were arrested and produced before king Jitshatru. The occultist Utpal had arrived there from Asthik village and was present in the court. He was dumbfounded to see the Lord in captivity. Visibly moved, he remonstrated, 'How very unjust!'

Said the king, 'Is it prescribed in your occultism to interfere in the state administration?'

'Treat it not as an interference your Majesty: it is a gross indiscretion of your officers.'

---

1. Fifth year of the pursuits at Kalambuka. Vide 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 290.
2. Sixth year of the pursuits.
3. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 291, 292.
4. Sixth year of the pursuits.

'How do you say that Utpal? Why do you behave so strangely today?'

'There is nothing strange in me, sire, I am all regrets and shame.'

'How come?'

'Don't you know my Lord who stands before you?'

'It's a common prisoner before me.'

'He is no prisoner. He is the great aspirant of freedom, Lord Mahavira!'

The name of Mahavira had an electric effect on the king. He rose to unbind the Lord himself and sincerely apologised for his officers' conduct. The Lord was quiet when put in bondage : he was quiet when freed.[1]

His mind had thrown wide open the doors of deliverance and therefore the arrest of the body displeased him not nor did the release exhilarate. What a curious experiment it was to imprison what which was already a captive.

(8) Every phenomenon need not invariably have a casual basis. There are events that have no rational explanation. The deer subsists on grass and still the hunters stalk him. The poor fish is happy in her watery world and still the fishermen spare it not. The gentlefolk stay contented in themselves and still the envious crooks don't leave them to their own lot.

The Lord meditated standing at Tosli village.[2] Sangam Deo was attempting to distract him. He entered the village in the guise of a sadhu to do housebreaking. The people caught and be laboured him. He said, 'Why beat me please?'

'You are the robber who broke the house. Who else would be beaten?'

'Do I come here to thieve of my own accord? It is my master who has abetted me to come hither.'

'Who happens to be your master?'

'Let me take you to him.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 294.

[2] Eleventh year of the pursuits.

Sangam led the following crowd to where the Lord meditated. Said Sangam,' Here stands my master.' The people enquired of the Lord,' Are you a robber?' The Lord was speechless. Then they repeated, 'Did you abet this man to steal?' The Lord was still mute. Seeing him unresponsive, they smelt something fishy. They took him to the village, tied.

Mahabhutil was the wizard well-known in the comtemporary world. He happened to pass that way. He observed that the bondage was trying to overpower deliverance. He challenged the villagers from afar. 'How stupid of you! What do you mean by it?'

The people saw that the speaker was no less than Mahabhutil. They paused. Bowing a little they said, 'Venerable sir! He is a robber. We are taking him to the village.' In the meantime Mahabhutil had arrived near. He prostrated at the feet of the Lord.

The villagers were awestruck. What could it mean? Have we mistook or it is Mahabhutil who is blundering? Is this man not an ordinary robber? They began to whisper amongst themselves. Mahabhutil averred, 'He is not a thief. He is Kumar Mahavira, the son of king Siddhartha. Shall the one who renounced the princely estates commit thefts in your houses? You all seem to be mentally bankrupt.'

'Pardon us, sir. We are ashamed of our conduct. We were stupid in behaving thus. But it was never deliberate, our ignorance is to blame for it,' the villagers said simultaneously.

The Lord was tranquil before the event, during the event and at the end of it. Tranquillity was the crowning glory of his life.[1]

(9) The Lord left Tosli and reached Mosli.[2] Sangam repeated the same incident there. The soldiers caught hold of the Lord and took him along to the royal palace. Sumagadh was the ruler of the village. He had been a friend of Siddhartha.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 312.

[2] Eleventh year of the pursuits.

He recognised the Lord and released him. He apologised on behalf of his soldiers and sincerely expressed his regrets.[1]
(10) The Lord revisited Tosli.[2] Sangam took some tools and left these near the Lord. The soldiers produced the Lord before the warrior chief of the place. He interrogated the Lord to which the latter did not respond. The chief grew suspicious. He awarded capital punishment to the prisoner.

The executioner put the rope round the neck of the Lord and pulled it. The rope gave way. Again, he was attempted to be hanged and the same thing happened. The miracle occurred seven times. The soldiers were astonished. They came to the chief and narrated the events. Said the chief—'He is not a thief. He must be a saint of no ordinary virtue.'

He rushed to the spot and did him homage, repenting for his conduct.[3]

The Lord had transcended the limits of non-forgiveness and forgiveness. There was none who merited punishment or forgiveness for that matter in his vast vision. He deftly swam along the stream of spontaneous tranquillity.

---

1. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 313.
2. Eleventh year of the pursuits.
3. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 313.

18

Emancipation of the Females

The fresh rays of the newly-risen sun traversed through the vast space to the blessed earth. The thick veil of dark was worn threadbare. The medium of light enabled each object to reveal itself. The lethargy of sleep was waning. Wakefulness moved ahead with gusto.

The inhabitants of Champa saw with dismay the encircling enemy laying siege of their town. The sudden invasion was like a thunderbolt. 'Who leads the army? What is the motive of the attack? Was some envoy sent in advance? Is our army prepared to give a fitting reply to the attack?' Everywhere the same questions were being put. But who would quench their curiosity?

The king Dadhiwahan arrived there to aid Subhadra.

Subhadra was a minor chief. He ruled under the suzerainty of Champa. He arranged a betrothal of his beautiful daughter with the prince of Ahichchhatra. It was unsavoury to the king Madanak of Bhaddita. He was keen to admit the princess to his seraglio. He threw gauntlets to Subhadra. Subhadra sought the aid of Dadhiwahan. Dadhiwahan mobilised his army to his succour.

King Shatanik of Vatsa dreamt of annexing Angadesh. Once, in the past, the army of Angadesh had given him a stunning defeat to shatter his expansionistic design. It was also a cause of his ire.

Kakmukh, the army chief of Shatanik, had once been rejected as a match for Bharini. The success of Dadhiwahan added fuel to the fire. He still harboured love for the princess Dharini. The expansionistic designs of Shatanik and the ire of Kakmukh combined to wreak vengeance on their common foe. The forces of Vatsa under the command of Kakmukh invaded Champa from land and sea simultaneously. They bamboozled the forces of Champa, who ill-prepared for this blitzcreig. The king had been away. The army had been taken by surprize. And still they resisted to the best of their might. But how long could the well-equipped army of Vatsa be fought?

The town-gates of the capital were lying wide open to the enemy. The vengeful wrath of Kakmukh was still burning. He allowed his army to plunder and loot. The soldiers ravaged the town.

No palace or house escaped depredation at their hands. They fell upon the royal palace also. Kakmukh kidnapped queen Dharini and princess Vasumati.

The soldiers were returning to their camps bragging of their bestial valour. Such is the miserable chronicle of mankind that hawks of devastation ever build their barbarous palaces on another's ruin.

How did the citizens of Champa merit this pillage? What had the poor folk done to Shatanik or his army? The sole guilt of the vanquished was that they did not happen to be victors. They had suffered a terrible defeat in the battle-field. Weakness is deemed to be the greatest sin. The innocent poor has to see the dock. Dadhiwahan was no match to Shatanik and could have been wiped off in no time. If he had ventured to fight with the enemy the ordeal of his people might have been manifold. He had hoped that by resorting to abdication he would redeem his subjects' lot. He translated his resolve into action. But when has puffed up vanity of a victor refrained from a gruesome display of its brute strength?

The pointless show of force saw thousands and thousands of harmless citizens butchered. How, then were the palace and the female apartments to be spared by the tyrant? Dharini and Vasumati were subjected to the cruellest bestiality humanity has ever seen. Kakmukh, a braggadoci that he was, said, ' I cared tuppence for the riches. I dashed straight to the palace. A little resistance was put up by the enemy forces. However, I made my way to the female apartment and kidnapped the queen, I needed a consort. I felt she shall be my consort. I abducted the princess also. When in need of wealth I would dispose her off.'

The bragging of Kakmukh shocked the queen. The jolt to her tender heart was awful. She swooned. Young Vasumati attempted to bring her mother to senses. But the swoon was interminable. Her heart-beats, failing to remedy her anguish, themselves failed.

He kidnapped the queen and his lashing tongue brought her to her doom. The inert corpse was left behind.

The expiry of the queen converted the heart of Kakmukh. He grew wiser by experience. Once again he was humane. He retrospected his foul deeds. He regretted his devilish acts of kidnapping and abduction. During excitement man loses his sanity and wisdom. In lucid moments he retrospects with compunction the futility of his deeds. It is so with each individual. But the deed having been committed in the heat of the moment, the belated sanity scarcely purges one of the sin. The right hand of Kakmukh was dyed red with his gory sins. And still his left hand seemed to be innocent. The likelihood of the latter also dipping itself in innocent blood terrified him. He had fully exposed his callousness before Vasumati. His tear-filled eyes begged of her pardon. The heart-broken Kakmukh went to Kaushambi with bereaved Vasumati.

Trafficking in human beings was prevalent then. We are used to trafficking in cattle. Trafficking in men was as common then. The sold-off man served as a slave to the buyer and was treated as chattel. Man carried a far smaller worth then. Man, today, sees better days in contrast to those eges. We owe this escalation in human values to the austerities of Lord Mahavira.

Kakmukh appeared in the market-place where human beings were auctioned. The market was crowded. Hundreds awaited their fate at the hands of the bidders. Bids were being rallied against each other.

Vasumati was a royal princess. Beauty was writ large over her person. Her youth was on the verge of blossoming. Such a paragon of beauty and refinement on sale.! The entire market place was stunned.

A bidder sought to own her. But the price was too prohibitive.

Business magnate Dhanawaha happened to pass along the street. His eyes fell upon Vasumati. He was dumbfounded. He could see the blue-blood flowing in her veins.

He was stirred with pity. He parted with a fortune to own her and brought her home.

Said the trader, 'Dear daughter, let me know of your identity.'

Vasumati was solemn. She uttered no word. The trader repeated his question. She was still quiet. On his third attempt she only said, 'I happen to be your slave. What other description do I deserve?' She was shedding tears profusely. The trader melted. He cut short his dialogue.

Moola was the wife of the trader. She was astonished to see the maiden. Dhanawaha told her. 'I bring here a daughter for you. Bring her up with care, please!'

The temperament and behaviour of Vasumati charmed the household. She had stepped into the house as a slave and had attained a daughter's distinction on account of her virtues. The fragrance of her singular modesty and the coolness of her decency won for her the name of Chandana (Sandal).

The blooming beauty of Chandana provoked envy in other young ladies. Moola herself fell a prey to the mounting whirl of suspicions. She doubted the veracity of the trader's display of filial affection for the young lady. He must be under her spell, she thought. I am being duped, it seems. I apprehend, the husband would enter into wedlock with this damsel. She thought, what shall be my destiny then? Such Chimerical fears made her life a hell.

Once the faith in oneself is lost, life becomes a drudgery. Alas, man opts to condemn himself by divorcing his own strength. Why does he not bank on his own self? Is it not by thus tapping extraneous resources that man smothers his inborn fountains of strength? And still we have to concede that it is a universal weakness. Lord Mahavira kindled the flame of self to counter such human foibles.

The sun was at the zenith. Earth's nooks and corners glowed in the scorching heat.

The skin was drenched with sweat. Dhanawah returned home from his business house. The servants had retired. There was none to bring water to wash the feet of the master. She appeared with a jug of water to wash his feet. The trader was reluctant to let her do this job of a menial. However, she would not listen to him. Her tresses hung low to touch the ground. The trader held the plaits up with his wooden comb and arranged them. Moola was watching it sitting in the inner verandah. The trader harboured no vice and Chandana was angelic in her innocence. Moola's vice was the canker in the rose. She was fired with envy.

Dhanawah had his usual siesta and went away to the market-place. Moola entered the house and sent for a barber. The head of Chandana was tonsured. She was fettered and hand-cuffed. She was clapped shut in a cell under lock-and-key. The servants and maids were strictly ordered to keep it a closely guarded secret. One could divulge it at the risk of one's life.

It was supper time. The trader came home. Chandana used to attend on him at meal-time, invariably. She did not appear there that day. Enquired the trader,' Where is Chandana?' Everyone replied uniformly, 'Who knows where she be?'

The trader presumed her to be entertaining herself with other maids or staying upstairs.

The trader returned at night from the shop. Again Chandana was missing. He repeated his question, but the reply was the same. He inferred that she had gone to bed earlier than usual. Next day also she was not seen. He again quenched his curiosity accordingly. When she was absent the third day, he grew serious. He collected all the servants and maids and demanded the whereabouts of Chandana. They were in a fix. Either way it would be a death to the person whether the fact would be revealed or concealed. They found themselves between she Scylla of the master's annoyance and the Chariboys of the mistress. How to dodge death? A resourceful old maid came to their succour. One unafraid of death solves one's own problems as well as of others. The wise maid plainly stated, 'Chandana is imprisoned in this cell.'

'Who did it?' questioned the master. The maid retorted, 'Why should we be interrogated on this issue?'

The trader could fathom the situation. He opened the door promptly.

As if the dark clouds were cleared once for all, the bright forehead of the fair Chandana emerged before him as a sun does in a cloudless sky.

'How unfortunate dear daughter? The wildest fancy would not see you treated in this manner.'

'None is to blame father. Nemesis is visiting me for some evil desert.'

The forbearance of Chandana and her affectionate tone consoled the trader.

'That you have suffered starvation and thirst wrenches my heart with anguish.'

'It least matters. I can have my meals now!' said she.

The trader went to find out if there were any meals for her. Cooking had not started in the kitchen. There was no rice left.

A little quantity of black-gram was lying there. He put it into the side of a window and lay it before her.

'Take it daughter. In the meantime I call a blacksmith.'

The trader left for a blacksmith to cut her fetters.

Lord Mahavira was wandering between Kaushambi and Vaishali then. He came to know the barbarian manner in which the victory festival was celebrated by Shatanik after plundering Champa. While his mercenaries pillaged the town, Dharini and Vasumati had been kidnapped. 'It's high time to revive non-vidence,' he felt. 'How ignoble and violent this conduct is! Violence encompasses in its vicious sweep even close kins. Were Padmavati and Mrigavati different? Both happened to be the daughters of King Chetak. If Padmavati is ruined, shall it please Mrigavati? But the ruthless monarchs pay no deference to the females. They are ever wilful and headstrong. Belligerent monarchs devour up the feebler states. It is a reprehensible practice. Such mean practices are not being given up. Shatanik is certainly not immortal. Can he ever wield the tremendous power he commands? Who can anticipate the likely calamities his people who survive him might suffer? The tyrant monarchs are oblivious of the bitter facts. Such recurring incidents spur me to sponsor non-violence.'

The Lord also learnt of the demise of queen Dharini and the vassalage of Vasumati. The incident thoroughly rocked him. The miserable plight of females and the minionhood they suffered was projected vividly before his mind's eye. He was determined to wage a war against this anti-feminism.

It was the twelfth year of his asceticism. The Lord arrived at Kaushambi. It was the first day of *Paush* month of the Indian calendar. The Lord took a vow :—

I will beg meals from none but the fettered and handcuffed princess whose head is tonsured, mealless for three continuous days with tear-filled eyes, standing on the threshold with the meagre black-grams in a window at her feet.'[1]

---

[1] 'Awashyàkchurni' I pt. pp. 316, 317.

The Lord sighted the form Chandana was in, clairvoyantly. In the none-too-attractive appearance of Chandana he divined her doubly-bright destiny.

The Lord went on his usual beat to seek meals from Kaushambi households. The householders came out with meals respectfully. However, the Lord turned away without accepting it. It was so the next day. The third and the fourth day were no different. People began to whisper amongst themselves. The Lord visits the houses but turns away without accepting the meals offered to him. What could be the cause? thought they.

Four months were over. The Lord stuck to his stoic vow. The citizens of Kaushambi knew that the Lord was foregoing his meals but none knew why it was so. The Lord would not share his secret with anybody. His vow of silence grew stronger day by day.

Sugupta is the minister of Kaushambi. Nanda is his wife. She is a devotee of saints. The Lord visited her place for begging meals. She solicited him to kindly accept meals. But he would not accept any. Nanda was heart-broken. Said her maid, 'Mistress, pray, why be so dejected? It is so with him everywhere. He visits each door but averts himself the moment food is offered. For the last four months he has been behaving likewise. Why then such low spirits on that account?'

The statement of the maid further disheartened the lady.

The minister came home for meals. He was astonished to find Nanda in a blue mood. He tried to know the cause but to no avail.

Nanda was gloomier than ever.

Her face was a battleground of the successive emotions. At last the minister asked her, 'What could be the cause of your worry, dear lady?'

'What use discussing it?'

'Unless you let me know how shall I learn of the cause?'

'Is not a minister supposed to mind the affairs of the entire state?'

'Yes, why not?'

'Are you aware of the occurrences in the capital?'

'I am aware of the occurrence of the entire state and beyond.'

'It is your ego that says so. Facts are different. Do you happen to know the whereabouts of Lord Mahavira?'

'I do not know but I am eager to know.'

'The Lord happens to be there in this town itself.'

'If Lord happens to be there in this town itself, it should please you rather than annoy you.'

'His presence certainly pleases me but the thought of his four-month-long starvation saddens my heart.'

'It should be an ascetic vow, I presume.'

'If it were a vow he would not have gone out abegging. He visits many a home everyday and returns without accepting offered victuals.'

'Why should my spies fail to report it to me?' he commented unhappily. Shatanik the king also seems to be unaware of it and so is his queen Mrigavati. I must probe it.'

The attendant Vijaya entered the chamber of the queen. She said, 'I came across a strange news at Nanda's place. P'haps you would like to know of it.'

'What does it pertain to?'

'Lord Mahavira.'

'Then I must know about it.'

Vijaya recounted what she had heard at Nanda's place. The queen was pained to learn of it. Shortly the king visited the inner apartments and he also became a sharer of her anguish.

King Shatanik and the counsellor Sugupta conferred with each other on the issue. They also invited Upadhaya Tathyavadi. He was a mature thinker and a teleologist. The king lay his problem before him. He failed to offer any solution.

The king grew pensive. He arrogantly said, 'It seems, counsellor, our spies have grown defunct. I must fix up the responsibilities. How is it that my counsellor fails in keeping me informed of so significant an event? Do not my officers know that the queen is a follower of the saints of the Parshwa tradition? Do they not know that Lord Mahavira belongs to the queen's faith?'

The counsellor presented himself to the Lord. He conveyed the concern of the king, the queen, his own wife and the townsmen and humbly prayed to him to break his fast. However, the Lord uttered no word. The counsellor went home disappointed.

The Lord conducted himself as before. He would visit various doors and return. The situation was awful. The town was engaged in discussing it. The fifth month was passed mealless. Twenty-five days of the sixth month also elapsed.

The townsmen eagerly awaited the news of his breaking the fast. The eagerness was now turned into impatience. They were introspecting themselves. The infernal act of invasion on Kaushambi and its plunder appeared in their vision. The king felt, possibly the Lord was expiating for his war-like sins.

Chandana recapitualated her royal past. The luxurious life of the past now appeared like a dream to her. The memories of Champa palace engrossed her. The black-grams lay before her.

It was the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month. The Lord left for his usual beat. A few people followed him. The Lord visited Dhanawaha's place. He did not halt at the kitchen. He went on to where Chandana sat at the threshold. She became aware of a figure. She scrambled to her feet. She presumed without throwing a glance that her adopted father had arrived with a blacksmith. The moment of freedom is come at last.

But it was the Father of the universe that stood before her. She saw and her intution said, 'Ah! it must be Lord Mahavira.' She was wild with joy. There was twinkle in her eyes. She was jubillant. Gone were the thoughts of destitution.

The Lord stood before her. He saw before him the misery incarnate of Vasumati he had envisioned. And still the picture missed something vital—the tears. The Lord turned back. Chandana was broke. A fiasco at this long last! Tears streamed forth. She cried, 'My Lord! You stood in my vision as a great feminist and deliverer of the slaves. Your cruel rejection of my food disillusions me. To none but you I owe hope in my misfortune. You have demonstrated that you don't belong to me. Calamities one has to suffer alone. I had forgotten this dictum.'

Chandana felt utterly frustrated. Her resistance broke down and she began sobbing. The Lord turned to see this condition fulfilled. He again stood before her. She offered the boiled black-gram. So exhilarated was she that her fetters and handcuffs crumbled down without a blacksmith's aid. Her complexion grew fairer.

The entire town came to know of the great event of the Lord accepting the meals offered by trader Dhanawaha's maid. Thousands thronged his door. The servant class was beside itself with joy. King Shatanik also arrived. He was accompanied by queen Mrigavati. Nanda was delighted. The counsellor was relieved of a great burden.

People were impatient to see Chandana. She came out. The tumult of the crowd became articulate as the adulation of Chandana.

Sampul was the attendant of king Dadhiwahan. King Shatanik had imprisoned him when Champa was vanquished. He had been freed only this day. He had followed the king to the palace. He recognised Chandana. He rushed to her feet and broke into sobs. Chandana consoled him. The two were reminded of the remote past as they saw each other.

The king enquired of Sampul.

'Who is this maiden?'

'She is Vasumati, daughter of Dadhiwahan.'

'Then she is my sister's daughter, 'said Mrigawati.

Dhanawah arrived with a blacksmith. Curious talks were audible. It was an unparallelled sight. He entered and saw Chandana presenting a divine sight. He was estatic. He invited her to come with him to the royal palace. However, she declined it pointblank. The queen once more urged her to accept the request. 'Why should you not accompany us to the royal palace?' asked the queen.

Said she, 'A slave has no will of her own.'

'How come that you are a slave?'

'King Shatanik can better explain it.'

'The king bowed his head in remorse. He was ashamed of his belligerency. He could understand the causes that led to the slavery of Chandana. He sent for Dhanawaha. Chandana was no more a slave. The silent non-cooperation of the Lord elevated the slaves and hit the system of slavery at its very root.[1]

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 316-320.

19

Enlightenment : The Summum Bonum

The east is dyed with rosy tints. The infant sun bathes everything in a reddish hue. The thickened dark melted and vanished in no time, as if it had never existed. What a potent presence this dark had been to obliterate all other existence!

Lord Mahavira perceives a strange light today. He experiences the rising sun with a redoubled vigour. It seems the veil over the existence is going to be torn in no time.

The Lord sits in a Godohika* posture. He has forgone meals for two days. He is exposing himself to the warmth of the sun. He experiences the profoundest meditation described as *shukla.* He escalated to the higher planes of contemplation and ultimately stood face to face with the Reality with no veil between. The sun of Enlightenment rose to stay for ever.

How hallowed was the periphery of Ambhiyagram! It's the northern back of the Rijubalika river. In the north-eastern part of the ruined temple, in the field of one Syamak householder below the *sal* tree the sun of Enlightenment rose.

How glorific was the hour! It was the tenth day of the moon in the second month of Indian calendar. It was the fourth quarter of the day. Astronomically the hour is called Vijayamuhurta—the hour of triumph. The moon was in the Uttaraphalguni constellation. Such was the moment when the Dawn of Enlightenment occurred.

---

* Squatting on toes with hands on knees as one sits to milk a cow.

The Lord was now the Enlightened, the omniscinet and the clairvoyant. He mastered the capacity to know all matter and its modes. The subtle, obstructed and remote objects were automatically projected in his awareness. There was neither any curiosity nor inquisitiveness. Everything is spontaneous and tranquil. Like a quiet ocean there is no oscillation, no wave. The tide and the ebb of problems cease to exist. No tempest, no upsurging, no tumult. All quiet and serene.[1]

The Lord stayed there for forty-eight minutes. Then he moved towards his destination.[2]

---

[1] 'Ayarchula' 15/38, 39. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 322, 323.

[2] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 324.

20

The Tirtha (Moral Order) and the Tirthankar

On the eleventh day of the moon of Vaisakh, the second month of Indian calendar, Lord Mahavira reached Madhyam Pawa. He stayed at Mahasena garden.[1] He was alone externally and internally, both. He had no disciple with himself, nor any attendant.

The Lord has hitherto devoted himself to the spiritual pursuits. Now was the moment of its culmination. Now all the time was his. A spontaneous urge for the commonweal flooded his heart.

A Brahmin named Saumil lived at Madhyam Pawa. He organised a large Yagna (sacrificial rite). Eleven Knowledgeable pundits were invited to perform the Yagna.

Indrabhuti, Agnibhuti and Vayubhuti were real brothers. They belonged to Gautam partonymic. They resided at Gobar village in Magadh. They had 500 disciples each.

Two scholars arrived from Kollaga. One was Vyakta and the other Sudharma. Vyakta was from Bharadwaja patronymic and Sudharma from Agni-Vaisyayan. They had no less than five-hundred disciples each.

Two scholars arrived from Maurya province. One was called Mandit and the other Mauryaputra. Mandit was from Vashistha patronymic and Mauryaputra from Kasyap. They had three-hundred and fifty disciples each.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 324.

Akampita came from Mithila, Achalbhrata from Kaushal, Metarya from Tungik and Prabhas from Rajgriha. The first belonged to Gautam, the second to Harita and the last two to Kaundinya patronymic. They had three-hundred disciples each.

These eleven scholars and their 4400 disciples were present at the site where Saumil was to perform the Yagna.

The Lord felt the necessity of sponsoring non-violence among the masses.

Mahavratas or major observances should be promoted amongst them who have the calibre to stand these and anuvrata or minor observances amongst the minor souls. Sacrifices, slavery and such violent evils of the society ought to be eradicated. I must seek a few dependable associates for the purpose, he thought. They should preferably be Brahmins.

The Lord could clairvoyantly see Indrabhuti and other profound scholars present at the place meant for the sacrificial rite. The Lord was impressed by their ability and the latter were drawn to him by his determined resolve.

The keeper of the garden brought a strange news to the king. Said he, 'Lord Mahavira has graced our garden today.'

The tiding pleased the king.

The keeper added, 'The Lord has commenced speaking.'

This development was doubly welcome.

'It is not from the horse's mouth, my Lord, but I learn the Lord proposes to preach today,' said he.

There couldn't be anything happier. The Royal Majesty himself visited the Mahasena garden to publicise the important news.

Indrabhuti saw thousands pressing forward in one direction. It intrigued him. What could be the cause? He sent the messenger to find out the why and wheretofore of such an unusual exodus. The messenger returned with the news. The Master of *Shramanas* (saint) has arrived. His pursuits have yielded ominiscience to him. It is going to be his maiden oration.[1] The masses proceed to listen to him.

The news was none-too-palatable to Indrabhuti. He was smarted to think that the *shramanas* had left no stone unturned in debilitating the tradition of rites. The pioneer *shramana* Parshwa has considerably weakened the institution, he thought. His followers make us spend many a sleepless nights even now. Is not the advent of this charismatic spiritual leader a death-knell to us? I must nip it in the bud. He is the first spark which we must put out before it's too late. Belated exertions go unrewarded. I will tarry no longer. My task should be to confute the thesis of the *shramana* leader and convert him to Vedic faith. The twin benefits shall be :—

1. The institution of rites shall have in its fold a potent leader.
2. There will be a mass-conversion from *shramanic* faith to Vedic faith.

Indrabhuti gave himself heart and soul to the cause. He cherished a dream to triumph. He summoned his train of followers to escort him. In the meantime a few people were seen returning. Indrabhuti asked them, 'Wherefrom brethren?'

'From Mahavira's preaching.'

'Did you see Mahavira? How did you find him?'

'Matchless in excellence. He is a marvel of a man, the entire being suffused with an aura of austerities.'

'Who were allowed in the congregation?'

'The entry was unrestricted.'

'It must have been a large gathering.'

'Thousands thronged there. The place was packed to the brim. However, none of the visitors comes disappointed.'

This took away the wind off the sails of Indrabhuti. He was vacillating. Mahavira was certainly not an ordinary man. The observations of those who saw him confirmed that he commanded immense spiritual power and glory after elevating himself with prolonged austerities. 'Shall my visit be fruitful?' He asked himself. But human vanity asserted itself. He was conceited with his pedantry. Numerous pundits had met their downfall in disputations with him. He believed himself to be invincible. These vain thoughts again revived in him the desire to approach Mahavira. His feet moved ahead and thousands of feet followed them. The adulations of the great Master uttered by the disciples resounded the place. The attention of the citizens of Pawa was caught by this group. The highway saw them in stunned quietness.

---

[1] Digambaras believe that the Lord delivered his first oration after 65 days of enlightenment on the first day of the dark fortnight of Sravana month.

Indrabhuti reached the outhouse of Mahasena garden. He saw the congregation. The sight fascinated him. He found his heart softening with a strange kindred feeling as if his ego was vanishing and humility replacing it. His pace was slackened. Why go thither with a militant mood? However, habits die hard. He braced himself up and proceeded to face Mahavira.

The Lord glanced Indrabhuti, his compassionate eyes transmitting his usual everflowing nectar of love to the latter. He accosted him, 'So you have come Gautam Indrabhuti!'

Indrabhuti stood statue like, rigid and speechless. It amazed him how he happened to know his name. He had never seen the Lord in the past. None could have conveyed to him that Indrabhuti was his name. How could he know, after all! The ego of Indrabhuti hissed like a writhing serpent. It suggested to him. 'Who be there that knows me not? I induce terror amongst the residents of Malwa. Saurastra is my domain. The pundits of Kashi and Kaushal met ignoble defeats at my hands. Does the sun beg introduction? Mahavira is too shrewd. It's his subterfuge to affect omniscience by revealing my name, caste and antecedents and thus take me in his fold. But am I a brainless fish to be so easily netted? I will defeat all such manoeuvres.'

Indrabhuti was weaving a tightening net of fancies around himself. Lord Mahavira spoke in a reconcilatory tone,' You have doubts in the existence of *jiva* (individual soul). Is it not so?'

Indrabhuti was nonplussed. How could he know? This revelation of the closely-guarded philosophical doubts of his was enigmatic. Could it be that Mahavira is truly omniscient? He asked himself. How could he divine the sharer of this metaphysical quiz that puzzles me? How could he know of it, then? he felt, yes I seem to be noosed in this cesspool of events beyond my comprehension. To be freed from it is beyond my competence. It is closing round me.

Said the Lord once more, 'Indrabhuti, pray, why doubt your own existence? How can that which has no beginning and end have a middle? The existence of the present is an indication of the past and the future. Not an atom ceases to exist. How then, shall man cease to exist? Existence is a perennial flame that at no point of time was extinguished and never shall be. None can deny this self-evident truth.'

'If subtle principles are denied how shall motion and space be accepted? This *jiva* is a transcendental truth. Don't muffle it up with sensory perception but realize it by means of transcendental experience.'

Truth found expression in the Lord's statement. The doubt in Indrabhuti's mind was unravelled. He became aware of his existence. Truth dawned upon him like a flash of lightning. An irresistible urge to realise his self swept him off his feet. Chocked with emotion he said, 'My Lord, I crave to realize my self. Pray be my guide and grant me your generous protection.'

'Amen,' said the Lord.

Indrabhuti consulted his disciples also. They all expressed a desire to tread in the footsteps of their master. Indrabhuti dedicated himself to the Lord alongwith his five-hundred disciples : an initiation for self-realisation had been embraced.

By thus initiating himself with the *Shramana* pioneer, Indrabhuti had added a feather to the cap of the great Brahminic tradition. Brahmin scholars have a great reputation as avid and unbiased learners and explorers of truth. These twin virtues of quest for learning and desire for truth won for them the laurels of wisdom and high accomplishment.

The news of Indrabhuti's initiation spread across the town in an instant. Agnibhuti and Vayubhuti also held a conference. They felt that the snare in which their brother was caught could not have been an ordinary one. However, efforts were warranted to rescue him.

Agnibhuti duly attended by his five-hundred disciples sought to redeem Indrabhuti from the great wizard who had weaned him away from his hereditary faith. The people were anxiously watching the outcome. They sounded one another about the possible result. Whether Indrabhuti would free himself from the *shramana* net and return to his earlier fold or it will entrap Agnibhuti as well? Some conjectured that the two brothers will be more than a match for Mahavira and may even convert him. Others vehemently contested it. Said they, 'Did Indrabhuti lack anything in scholarship? It is no less than a super-human miracle. The intellectual attainments of anybody who approaches the *shramana* chief are eclipsed instantaneously. The thinking process is arrested. We anticcipate in all certainty the imminence of the plight for Agnibhuti that his brother has already suffered.

Agnibhuti was being mentioned everywhere. Over hearing several comments he reached the outhouse of Mahasena garden. He suffered an experience akin to the one Indrabhuti had done earlier. He entered where the preaching was going on. The Lord accosted him as he did his brother, 'You have come, Gautama Agnibhuti!'

Agnibhuti was astonished to be addressed by his name and patronymic by a stranger. He was a victim of a spate of ideas. He was flabbergasted. The Lord made a frontal attack on his bewilderment, saying, 'Agnibhuti you have doubts about *karma.* Is it not so?'

Agnibhuti exchanged a glance with Indrabhuti. It appeared that he was seeking some directive from his brother. But what could the brother advise? He had inadvertently bowed down his head in devotion. Said he, My Lord! when my secret doubt has been made public, so should its solution be!

The Lord supported Agnibhuti's observation.

'Don't you know Agnibhuti that every action is followed by a corresponding reaction?'

'I happen to know it, sire, that an action must have a reaction.'

'What else is *karma?* It is the reaction of an action. Don't you know that every effect is preceded by a cause?'

'I do know, sire.'

'The phasing of evolution of human potentialities is palpable but the spring behind it that moves it is impalpable.

'This imperceptible but nonetheless real cause is *adrista** and *karma.'*

The faculty of Agnibhuti was befuddled. The very first sight of the Lord bred in him an urge to submit to him as a disciple. How can discipleship and polemics go hand in hand? Obviating protracted debates, he attained enlightenment. His errand was to retrieve Indrabhuti while his destiny led him to follow in the foot-steps of his brother. He, alongwith his five hundred disciples, sought refuge at the feet of the Lord.

The inhabitants of Pawa had been awaiting a different kind of tiding. The news of the initiation of Agnibhuti astounded them. Vayubhuti also learnt of it. He was also at his wit's end. He was more curious about it than resistant. Thought he—what virtue does the chief of *shramanas* own to overpower my two brothers? It is my firm belief that polemics is my brother's *forte.* They owe their undoing to the spiritual powers of the *shraman* chief.

Vayubhuti was tempted to see the Lord. He came escorted by his 500 disciples to the place where the Lord camped.

The Lord addressed himself to the stranger thus : 'Vayubhuti, your dogma that the body and the soul are identical stands to correction. Vividly do I see that the body and the soul are not identical. The two are different :

'Can it be realised, My Lord?'

---

* Invisible moral desert.

'In all certainly.'

'Does it lie in my competence to do so?'

'It lies in everybody's competence who believes in a soul and looks forward to heightening his spiritual virility.'

Vayubhuti's spiritual urge grew intense like a tornado. No longer can this self-realization be put off.

He, that very instant, sought initiation from the Lord to launch the quest of soul?

It took a few hours only for the Lord's school to grow. Years had he spent alone. Today his fifteen-hundred disciples surround him and still the door is not closed.

The place meant for the sacrificial rites presented a desolate look. The convenors were anxiety-torn. Failure was writ large over their demeanour. They were gloom-engulfed. They thought it proper to impede other scholars from paying a visit to the leader of *shramanas.*

As money attracts more money and positive pole a negative one, so Mahavira drew all the remaining scholars irresistibly one by one. They approached him and the Lord's address inducing a novel faith, they sought initiation.

The dogmas they respectively held, were :

Vyakta :—Panchabhutas or five elements do not exist.
Sudharma :—Subsequent to death a creature is reincarnated into that very species.
Mandit :—There is no bondage, nor liberation.
Mauryaputra :—There is no heaven.
Akampit :—There is no hell.
Achalbhrata :—Virtuous moral desert and vicious moral desert do not exist seperately.
Metarya :—There is no reincarnation.
Prabhas :—There is no liberation.[1]

The Lord gave a discourse analyzing *dharma.* He propounded its two wings—non-violence and equanimity. He said—Inequanimity causes violence and the latter in its turn leads to a moral decline. Individual decline cumulatively causes collective moral deterioration. Non-violence is a *sine qua non* to stave off this moral descent and equanimity serves to fortify non-violence.

---

[1] 'Awashyakniryukti Gatha 644-760,' 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 334-339.

In the oppressive atmosphere of violence, hatred, sacrificial rites and inequality his precept was hailed like the first beam of sunlight after a moonless night. The masses craved for this light. It was given to the moral paragon like Mahavira to provide it to them. Numberless men and women dedicated themselves heart and soul at his mighty feet.

Chandanabala presented herself to seek initiation. Vedic tradition forbade initiation of females. Among the *shramanas* females were allowed initiation. The nuns of Parshwa tradition did exist then but proper guidance was missing. They lapsed into Vedic mendicancy after flouting initiation.

Lord Mahavira sought to revolutionise this anti-feminist attitude. The Vedic exponents dubbed them as inferior creatures. The Lord could not uphold such a narrow and biased view. He established the nunhood and thus lent a new lease to the movement for female reconstruction.

The Lord initiated Chandana and entrusted to her the task of supervising female saints. Indrabhuti and ten other scholars were asked to lead the male *Shramanas.*

Lord Mahavira had been brought up in the liberal republican atmosphere. The principle of political and economic decentralisation was valuable to him. An atmosphere of non-violence was vital to him. Such a noble system hardly reconciles with totalitarianism.

The Lord decentralised the monasticism by dividing it into categories. Indrabhuti and other were the heads of these groups. The first seven *ganas* or groups were led by one leader each. Akampit and Achalbhrata led the eighth and Metarya and Prabhas the ninth one. Thus a co-ordinated joint preceptorship was founded. Those who would not brace themselves up for monkhood and still aspired to be initiated into the religion of equanimity were initiated in the minor observances

Anuvratas. They were called *shravaka* and *shravikas* (the male and the female initiated ones.)

Hitherto the Lord's concern had been with his own spiritual welfare. Now his energies were channelised to commonweal.

Lord Mahavira founded the fourfold *tirthas* (literally-shrines) of monks, nuns, *shravakas* and *shravikas* and became the *Tirthankar.* Hitherto the Lord was an individual and led an individual existence. How he became the organisation incarnate and the vista of his organisational existence was thrown wide open.

The Lord had not attended to his own welfare selfishly. His action had been motivated by a time-honoured principle. An empty shell cannot fill others. One who possesses nothing can hardly award anything to others. One can inspire others to attain accomplishment by himself being triumphant first. Enlightenment can be granted to others by first attaining enlightenment. Others can be aroused by one who is already aroused. Once the Lord was enlightened the process to enlighten others was set in.

21

The Perennial Stream of Wisdom

In that era two thousand and five hundred years ago the mode of transmission of knowledge was by spoken word and that of its reservation by retention in memory. Written word was little in vogue. Hence memory was variously developed. Authorship was also dependent on the faculty of memory. In these circumstances aphoristic and laconic style was resorted to while creating scholarly works. The purpose was to express succinctly and tersely.

The responsibility to propagate the word of Lord Mahavira fell on Indrabhuti and other *ganadharas.* Hence it was incumbent on them to grasp his essentials of metaphysics.

Indrabhuti humbly questioned, 'what is the ultimate metaphysical principle, sire?'

'The matter is created.'

'If matter be by its nature creatable how shall it be contained in the universe?'

'The matter is destroyed.'

'If the matter be destructible, My Lord, it will be created and destroyed. What shall remain then?'

'The matter is perennial.'

'Sire ! How shall that which is destructible be perennial? Are not destructibility and conservation incompatible?'

'It is not incompatibility : it is relativity. It was dark in the cottage. The lamp was lit and it was light. It is put out and again there is dark. The light and the dark are modes.

'They are by a constant process of conversion lapsing one into the other. Atom, on the other hand, is indestructible. Its existence is lasting and interminable in the mutually convertible modes of dark and light.'

The stream of trinomial syllogism lent sustenance to the intellect of these leaders of a nascent order! They read new meanings in this epistemology and in their turn elaborated it into a compendium with twelve parts. The work enunciated the metaphysics and epistemology of Lord Mahavira.

They regretted that hitherto they had been squandering energies in modes instead of discovering the ultimate reality. Men, beasts and birds are apparently different realities while in the ultimate analysis they are modes of one reality. Self is the ultimate reality and the myriad modes differ from one another only in outward appearances. They owe their diverse appearances to the illuminant self. What relevance can the arbitrary state of the high or the low, the noble or the commoner have? How can one land caste-marks and stigmatize the other as utouchable? When the diverse appearances owe their origin to the evershining refulgence of the self how inane the birth-riveted castes are? How can casteism, so much esteemed, signify any truth worth the name? What rationale could there be to run down the females and the low caste people?

The deities and the beasts all borrow sustenance from the ever-illumunating self. How then can the heinous practice of animal sacrifice to appease the deities be rationalised?

The trinomial syllogism tore the veil of illusion of the *ganadharas.* The accumulated latencies were washed off, thanks to the enlightenment granted to them by the Lord.

22

The Religious Order and its System

Lord Mahavira pursued non-violence. Such a conduct implies dissolution of the mental glands. This is deliverance; this is freedom. In political termnology the connotation of freedom is relative. A country is in bondage when reigned by another country. When the people themselves exercise sovereignty over their territory the country is termed as independent. In the domain of non-violence freedom is an absolute term. One whose mind is not free of the glands of inhibitions and prejudices is fettered irrespective of the fact whether others rule him or not. One whose mind is free of these inhibition is free notwithstanding another's dominance over him. In his slightly enigmatic style said he, 'A non-violent being is neither in bondage nor free. He is not in bondage since no external restriction fetters him. He is not free as he is not supposed to flout the norms of self-discipline.'

A non-violent being participating in community life does accept the restraint of a social system but his orientation is more towards freedom from systems.

Lord Mahavira propounded a society which is free from the tyranny of a system. Such a society has not materialised to date and hence we may fail to appreciate such a Utopia but the fact remains that it has been conceived which is no small thing in itself.

The Lord revealed that the gods *par excellence* are called Ahamindra. Each divine of this kind is independent. There is no ruler and the ruled amongst them. There is no master and servant nor any hierarchy of the low and the high. They are sovereign in themselves. They are sovereign because they have purged themselves of anger, vanity, mundanness and avarice.

Our society, on the other hand, is ruled by the state. Since the individual has not been able to eradicate anger, he estranges others. His vanity is irrepressible and hence he deems himself higher than others. His materialism is far from sublimated and hence he attempts to beguie others. His avarice is primarily raw and unprocessed that prompts him to undermine interests of others for the sake of his own selfish ends.

A society impelled by bitterness, classhierarchies, craftiness, and an unconcern for others can hardly be called sovereign.

Democracy is an application of non-violence to public administration. The scope for evolution lies towards abstention and individual freedom. A democracy whose citizens have a scant faith in non-violence implies a faith in one's inherent perfection and a similar faith in the perfection of others.

Violence is an endless hankering after imperfection while non-violence is a quest for perfection. An individual burning with attachment and malice cannot achieve perfection. But an aspirant who has put out this burning pyre of desires makes a positive headway towards perfection. Mahavira modelled the religious system for such forward-looking people.

The Lord stuck a balance between self-restraint and disciplined system. Self-restraint is a *sine qua non in* the endeavour to liberate oneself. Discipline is also indispensable to harmonise individual proclivities, heredity and attainments. A spiritual discipline devoid of self-abnegation is a myth. Self-abnegation in the absence of discipline is, more often than not, a rudderless ship. Any order worth its name is a product of both. The Lord arranged the system of religious leadership into several units :—

1. *Acharya,*
2. *Upadhyaya,*

3. *Sthawara,*
4. *Pravartak,*
5. *Gani,*
6. *Ganadhara,*
7. *Ganavochhedak.*

It was enjoined upon them to manage education, spiritual courses, social service, propagation of religion, articles pertinent thereto, movements of the saints and such other socio-religious necessities. The institution of religious preceptorship did not evolve overnight. As the religious preceptors multiplied, the religious leadership proliferated in different directions to fortify the system.

The marvel that such a systematic evolution of collective religious leadership presents is nowhere to be seen in other religious traditions. The system was founded on the principles of non-violence, freedom and relativism enunciated by Lord Mahavira. That is the reason why the Lord never set store by a discipline devoid of self-restraint. The Lord incorporated a decalogue in his religious system. One of these ten prerequisites is voluntariness. A saint prior to serving another saint would assure that he was serving the latter of his own sweet will. Before seeking another's help the latter was forewarned that he was free to withhold the help· It was inconceivable to extort service or help from anybody. Excepting exigencies even an Acharya was to strictly abstain from exercising coercion of any kind.

The Shedule :

The Lord prescribed the schedule of activities of the monastic organisation. It entailed study of religious and allied texts in the first quarter of the day, meditation in the second, meals etc. in the third and a second round of scriptural study in the fourth. On similar lines the noctural conduct was prescribed with the sleep replacing meal-taking in the third respective quarter.

Meals and Movement *(vihar)* :

The rules governing the meal-taking were :—

1. A monk shall not eat during the night.
2. Ordinarily only one meal be taken after midday.
3. If more meals than one are taken the food begged in the first quarter of the day is diallowed in the fourth quarter.
4. No more than thirty-two mouthsful be taken.
5. A use of intoxicants and stimulants was prohibited.
6. The food be begged from door to door. Food specially prepared for them be not accepted.
7. The food brought by another be not accepted.

The disciples of Lord Parshwa were not hidebound by any prescribed movement. They were free to camp at a village as long as they liked. Lord Mahavira devised a modified system of *Navakalpivihar* or division of a year into nine parts for the purpose of the movements of a monk. A monk is permitted to stay at one place during the entire rainy season. During the rest of the eight months he is supposed to spend maximum one month at a village.

The Begging bowl :

When Lord Mahavira was initiated he had no bowl. He took his first meal in a householder's bowl. It set a chain of thoughts in his mind—Some one is to cleanse and rinse this utensil? Why set this new chain of actions with its moral involvements? Why should others be bothered to do all this for my sake? He ceased to eat in a bowl. He became a *Panipatra* i.e. one who eats from his own palm.[1]

During the period of his austere practices the Lord once stayed in the weaving shed[2] Said *Gaushalak*, 'Sire, let me bring food for you. 'The Lord declined the offer as he had vowed to abstain from eating in a householder's utensil.[3]

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. p. 271. : 'Acharangachurni' p. 309.

[2] Second year of the pursuits.

[3] 'Awashyakchurni. I pt. p. 271.

For this reason the Lord visited the householders and took his meals standing at the spot. After establishing the *tirthas* he allowed a monk to possess one bowl. They then began to carry the begged food in these bowls. The Lord had no need to go for begging the meals. Ganadhar Gautam arranged for his meals. Monk Loharya was deputed to do it. The Lord used to accept meals carried by him. A commedation by an Acarya in his honour runs thus—

Thrice lucky Loharya *shramana* be,
Tolerant and with fair golden hue.
Who brought the food that Lord would take, with his own gracious hands.[1]

Protocol *in terse :*

With respect to mutual greetings and courtesies there are two criteria monkhood-oriented and order-oriented. According to the first criterion monkhood is venerable. One who has renounced householdership, the male saint or the female, is venerable to all. From the second criterion he ordained that depending on the length of sainthood the junior saint male or female should bow to the senior one.[2]

His precise instruction regarding the mutual greetings of the saints, male or female, is not extant. In later works it is recorded that a nun initiated a hundred years ago shall bow in greeting to a monk initiated only today, since it is the male *Purusha* who has pioneered *dharma.* Again it is the male who has enunciated *dharma.* He is the senior. In laiety also it is the male who dominates, what to say of religious plane.[3]

The then belief held the male in a higher esteem. Various religious systems idolised the male. Buddhistic literature endorses this male-dominated view. The great Gautami greeted Ananda 'May he live for long, Venerable Ananda, sir! I seek a kind favour of the Lord.'

---

[1] 'Ayaro' 9/1/19. : 'Acharangachurni' p. 309 : 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. p. 271.

[2] 'Dasvealiiyam' 9/3/3.

[3] 'Upadeshamala verses' 15-16.

'It were better if he had prescribed for the mutual courtesy, bowing, folding hands and doing homage related to the seniority of intitiation amongst the monks and nuns.'

Ananda conveyed the prayer to Buddha. Said the Lord 'Know it Ananda! *Tathagata* (Buddha) holds it inconceivable to allow any kind of greetings by rising from the seat, folding hands or doing homages whatsoever to the female saints.

'Ananda! Even the sadhus belonging to cruder religions disallow any greeting in respect, folding hands and the like to their nuns. How then shall Tathagata allow the females this undeserved honour?'

Lord Buddha resumed after narrating various religious fables, 'Worthy monks! Abstain from showing respect to females by greeting, rising, folding hands and the like. One who ignores the cammand commits the sin called *Utkat.*[1]

Lord Mahavira was quite liberal towards the females. No privilege was denied to them in the religious sphere. The principle of equality was applied without discrimination to the males as well as the females. Hence one is tempted to garb his novel monastic protocol thus—

1. A monk initiated later should bow to a senior monk.
2. A nun initiated later should bow to a senior nun.

Collective Values :

Lord Mahavira was an apostle of individual freedom and a great pioneer of collective values. The corollary of relativism is individual-oriented community and community-oriented individual.

Liberty and organisation both are relative truths. To disregard either is to disregard both. The commentator puts it thus—

'One who dishonours one monk, dishonours the entire monastic order, and one who adores one monk, adores the entire order.'[1]

---

[1] 'Vivayapitaka' p. 522.

Predilections, latencies and individual mental set up cannot be reduced to axions. These are essentially personal values. Modes of initiation are collective values. The Lord prescribed his system keeping in view the latter. The incident of Meghkumar's career amply bears it out.

Meghkumar sought initiation from the Lord.[2] The monks occupied their respective places to sleep, keeping in view their length of monastic life each had had., Meghkumar being the juniormost had to sleep at the entrance.

The Lord had a vast entourage of monks. They moved about on account of their bodily necessities, scriptural study or meditation etc. One would happen to touch Meghkumar's hand, another his foot, a third his head. This bustle kept him waking all through the night. Not a wink could he have.

The erstwhile prince had ever slept on soft beds in the palatial buildings. Stony bed, limited space near an entrance and the recurrent tactile disturbance of the extremities of the monks was too much for his delicate constitution. Thought he—'I was the prince of king Shrenik and queen Dharini. I was the sole recipient of their filial affection. So long as I stayed a householder these monks showered great courtesy on me. They would impart me wisdom. They would be ever soft-spoken to me. Now I have embraced monkhood. Now they spare to respect me and to enquire of my welfare, thus relegating me to an entrace. I have been denied all sleep. How shall I survive in the circumstances? To pass any more of such a night is a hell. I shall approach the Lord the moment the sun rises and seek permission to revert to a domestic life.'[3]

Since then the Lord released the neo-initiates from such a seniority-ridden system. They were to be privileged in certain matters thenceforth.

---

1. 'Aughniryukti Gatha' : 526, 527.
2. First year of Tirthankarhood.
3. 'Nayadhammakhao,' 1/152-154.

'The ones who serve the neo-initiate may attain[1] *Tirthankarhood* as I have done!' With these words the Lord stabilized the privileges of the neo-initiates, while seniority-oriented system prevailed as usual for the monks of a certain standing.'

Service :

Service is the archstone of a collective life. Human nature varies from man to man. Hence Lord Mahavira classified human beings in the following categories from this angle:[2]

1. Some people claim service from others but never render any service to others.
2. Some people render service to others but never seek another's service.
3. Some people seek service from others as well as reciprocate it.
4. Some people neither seek service from others nor serve anybody.

In a communal living the commonest practice is to mutually serve and be served. The Lord ordained the principle of service based on this mutuality.

Suppose some monks are going *enroute* to their next destination. They come to know of an ailing monk in that village. They may visit the village and if any attendance is needed they might halt there. If no such attendance is warranted they need not break the journey. If they neglect to enquire of the sadhu's welfare they transgress the religious code and should expiate the sin so committed.

The Lord equates such nursing of the ailing sadhu with the spiritual practices. As prescribed in the monastic code a monk would submit to the Acharya—'Sire, I have performed my prescribed duties. How do you want me to serve now?

---

1. Ibid, 8/12.
2. 'Thanam', 4/412.

If any service is warranted let me do it. In case I am not to be assigned a duty thus then command me to study books.'

Said the Lord 'One who serves an ailing sadhu serves me.'

'By serving a sick sadhu willingly and cheerfully one attains the heights which I have attained—one may become a *tirthankar.*'

Thus the Lord restored the monastic order and his system to its glory by incorporating loclective values into it.

23

Spiritual Pursuit Outside the Order

Lord Mahavira was a *tirthankar. Tirthankar* is one who realises truth and also propounds it. The contemporary Indian religion evinced two traits the one prescribed by scriptures and the other by *tirthankaras.*

The Mimansa system argued that a physically embodied being cannot be free from passion and attachment. One who is not dispassionate and unattached cannot be omniscient. The religious texts written by one who has not transcended passion and attachment do not bear the imprint of authority and testimony. Hence the Mimansakas rejected man-made works as testimony. They held Vedas alone in this elevated category believing them to be God-ordained.

The *shramana* philosophy held that *sastras* or scriptures are composed of letters and hence they are the creation of none but man. Man can look forward to become dispassionate and unattached by means of spiritual practice. Such a dispassionate and unattached being attains enlightenment. An enlightened being utters what bear the sanction of a testimony.

Buddhist literature enumerates Mahavira. Ajitkeshambali, Prabhudhakatyayana Gausiak, Sanjaya Velatthiputra and Purankasyapa as *tirthankaras.* Buddha was also a *tirthankar.* Shankaracharya recognises Kapil and Kanad also as *tirthankaras.*[1]

---

[1] 'Brahmasuta' 2-1-3—Shankar's Commentary.

Jain literature describes Mahavira as the herald of truth. Tradition numbers him as the twenty-fourth and the last *tirthankar* of this aeon *(Yuga)*. In fact, every *tirthankar* is a harbinger of truth. He does not enunciate truth on principles borrowed from any earlier scripture. He himself realises truth and then enunciates it. From this point of view each *tirthankar* is a harbinger and not a follower of another.

Lord Mahavira propounded truth by the dint of his own experience. Lord Parshwa was also a *tirthankar.* He had also enunciated truth on the basis of his own experience. If it is not necessary for the enunciation done by Mahavira to be identical with that done by Parshwa, it is equally not necessary for it to differ from the former. Truth has various facets. One who realised it does comprehend it and still one is not necessarily capcitated to propound it. The span of knowledge is limitless while that of its enunciation is limited. That renders its exposition rather limited and relative. Parshwa gave exposition to the principles that appealed to him. The rest he excluded from his compass. No exposition can be truly exhaustive. Lord Mahavira also laid bare these principles which he found relevant to the contemporary scene. The truth of the matter is that both the *tirthankaras* realised the selfsame truth even if enunciated differently.

The spiritual course of Lord Mahavira was slightly different from that of Parshwa. History reveals that Lord Parshwa was a protagonist of organised spiritual pursuit. Prior to him it had been an individual and isolated pursuit. Lord Parshwa awarded it a collective form.

Spiritualism is essentially individual. How can it be collectivised? One needs unbounded freedom to realise truth. In a collective life it is not attainable. A compromise has to be effected in such a mode of living while truth has no room for compromise. In practical life there is always some scope for diversity of views and disputation. Truth allows no polemics. Where there is dispute compromise is the answer. That which is beyond dispute allows no scope for any compromise. An orderly religious living entails mutual dealing, and wherever there is mutual dealing there is compromise. What led Lord Parshwa devise organised mode of religion? Why did Lord Mahavira recognise it? He certainly was not a follower or disciple of Parshwa. It was not incumbent on him to perpetuate the tradition ordained by Parshwa. How was it then that he choose to endorse a collective monastic pursuit?

Lord Mahavira trode the spiritual path alone. For years he himself was his company. Subsequent to enlightenment he diverted his attention to collective living. Once his inner bondage snapped, he agreed to accept the outer bondage. This bondage was a sanction for deliverance of innumerable beings. Indeed, it was a materialisation of the abstract rather than a bondage. The light incarnates into an earthen lamp. Its object is to emit light, nothing but to emit light.

The Lord organised spiritual pursuit in a peculiar context. The purpose was to regulate collective life with its indispensable mutuality. Some of the aspirants were physically invalid and others strong. Some aspirants were healthy and others debilitated. Some were in the prime of their life and others old. Weak, sick and aged aspirants found it difficult to pull on. Either they suffered privation or subsisted on the householders' help. Lord Parshwa felt that if an aspirant was in need let another aspirant fulfil it.

A householder has his own responsibilities which he is required to shoulder. The spiritual aspirants are free from domestic responsibilities. Let a fit aspirant, then, attend on an ailing one.

This concept was the keystone of collective spiritual pursuit. An unorganised pursuit suffers for the want of a regulatory system. On the other hand an organised pursuit has a built-in regulatory system. The regulatory system was incorporated in the spiritual regimen to present it in a regulated garb. An unorganised pursuit need not be uniform but an organised pursuit ought to be uniform. To effect this uniformity, a spiritual regimen was devised. The system introduced an element of discipline amongst the monks. It is not indispensable to organisation. Discipline and spiritual pursuit belong to different *genres.* The aspirants are also prone to fall in different categories. Some of them combine discipline with spiritual pursuit, while others like to keep it unencumbered with discipline. The pursuants of an unhampered course devise their own method. Other pursuants like to be initiated in the organisation and thereafter pursue their course independently. Lord Mahavira made allowance for all such varieties of individuals. He classed them in three categories :

1. *Pratyeka Buddha,* Those who never bound their pursuit with the organisation.
2. *Sthavirakalpi*—Pursuants within the monastic order.
3. *Jinakalpi.* Those who quit the order and pursue spiritualism.

Even during the days of Lord Parshwa this classification was in vogue. Monstic order was the centre of spiritual pursuit. Those who so desired were allowed to pursue their course alone. If they sought to be enrolled in the order after completing their pursuit, they were welcome. Lord Mahavira was never obsessed with order. His sole concern was with spiritual pursuit. The object of an aspirant is to achieve progress in the spiritual sphere, singly or collectively. To live in organised life is as reprehensible as to live alone, if spiritual practices are neglected. If organisation is deemed to be a *sine qua non,* any relinquishment of it is inconceivable. Once an individual joins it, he cannot quit it. If one abandons it, one cannot stage a come-back. Lord Mahavira kept the entrance to and exit from the order open. If one sought to join the order for the sake of spiritual pursuit, one was welcome to do so. But if one chose to quit the order for pursuing spiritualism one was equally free to do so.

The codes of conduct for the subscribers to the order and for those who were free were different. The subscribers were supposed to help one another mutually. The unhampered aspirants led their own individual life. The order awards the life its peculiar tenor of discipline and uniformity.

Lord Mahavira moved towards Sindhu-Sauvira.[1] It was summer. The villages in the way were few and far between. Scarcity of water and fellow-travellers was another cause of hardship. It was sand-dunes all around. Thirst-starvation-racked sadhus escorted the Lord. They came across a caravan of sesamum-laden bullock-carts. The cart-men saw the group of sadhus suffering pangs of lunger. They offered to sadhus the sesamum seeds. Now sesamum seeds are not supposed to bear life. And still the Lord disallowed this food to them. If sesamum were allowed once as food, it would have become a precedent. Then it would become a second nature with the sadhus, the fact of the seeds being living or otherwise being thrown into oblivion. How would each of the sadhus learn about the sesamum being living or non-living?

The Lord's caravan went a little ahead. Off the route a tank was visible. The thirsty sadhus exclaimed that at last water was available. The Lord could judge by the dint of his omniscience that the water bore no life. No violence would occur in taking such a water. And still he did not allow its use. If allowed once how shall tank-water be prescribed in future? How shall a common sadhu know which water is life-bearing and which not?

Thej journey saw the expiry of many sadhus but the orderly norms were not transgressed.[2]

In an orderly life the norms have to be respected. In solitary existence a concern for religion does exist but there is hardly any concern for norms.

There were thousands of monks who pursued their spiritual path after abandoning the order.

The Lord embellished the order and hence most of the

---

1. Fifth year of Tirthankarhood.
2. Brihatkalpa Chesya Gatha 997-999 pt. 2 pp. 314, 315.

pursuants chose to stay in it. Some votaries of other religions challenged the order.

The Lord's monks were once coming with some begged food. A hermit questioned them thus :

'Who are you ?'

'We are sadhus.'

'What do you carry in the utensil ?'

'It's food.'

'If you collect food how do you justify the name of a sadhu ? A sadhu should subsist on whatever he gets. Why carry utensils full of meals ?'

'We don't accumulate food-articles. However, we require this food that we carry for an ailing sadhu.'

'When you carry meals for others, you certainly are not sadhus. It's an act allowed to a householder not to a sadhu.

'It's attachment.'

'No. It's no attachment, it's service. It bears the stamp of Lord Mahavira. If one aspirant helps another, it is least objectionable. How do you call it an act fit for a householder ?'

Remaining within the order and still helping one another were not beyond dispute during those days. But in Lord Mahavira's view, it never detracted from the value of the spiritual pursuit within the order. However, he would not hold the free pursuit anytheless significant. The Lord held an unambiguous view in respect of the two modes of spiritual life. Said he—

1. An aspirant in need of co-operation may pursue his goal in the order.
2. One who has the capacity to go it alone along the spiritual path may do so.
3. A competent associate ought to keep company with a pursuant of nobler or equivalent character but not with one deficient in character. If there be no competent associate available it is incumbent on him to tread his path by himself.[1]

---

[1] 'Uttarajjhayani', 32/5

24

A Retrospection

Indrabhuti Gautam, came to the Lord. After doing homage he said, 'Sire. 'The Lord's present do I witness vividly. I propose to follow the Lord in future as does an ever-following shadow. However, my Lord, some part of the past has slipped out of my fingers. I regret not to have accompanied the Lord during his spiritual pursuits in the past. Pray, let me know something of it. If it be not inconvenient to the Lord, let me be thy confidante in respect of the practical experiences of those days, sir.'

The Lord acceded to the request and said, 'Gautam, these are the days of rivalries between the Brahmins and the Ksatriyas. I wish it goes once for all. As soon as I had been intitiated I endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation of the two castes. I took my first meal at a Brahmin's place.[1] It was the first experiment of its kind.

'The endeavour culminated in taking you into the fold. Gautam, I am surrounded by Brahmins. The ultimate reconciliation seems to be not far off now.'

'My Lord! Your kind steps to draw the two great castes nearer helped immensely. We were granted kind refuge by your grace. I presume my Lord, various other people must have been benefitted by your mighty efforts. Pray, let me know.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 27.

'Gautam, I have pursued the religion of equanimity. This alone I will propound. I find the spiritual capacity of males and females identical in all respects and neither of the two inferior or superior to the other. For full 175 days I did without meals. Then I accepted food from Chandanabala's hands. It was not a meaningless obduracy. It was an endeavour to redeem the femininity.'

'Sire! I do see that this novel experiment was eminently successful. Initiation of Chandanbala by the Lord threw open the hitherto closed avenues of feminine progress. Does not the rise of a class at the hands of your divine grace augur a corresponding fall of the other?'

'Gautam, an aspirant of the code of equanimity seeks a universal welfare. He never desires any group's rise at the expense of another group. A path of inequity alone creates a clash of interests. I threw a challenge to slavery to seek welfare for all. My religion of equanimity cannot stand human slavery in any form. I foresee a damation of the rich in slavery, and not otherwise.

'If it be convenient my Lord, I am curious to know whether the experiments in equanimity pertained to human fraternity only or to the animal world as well.'

'Gautam, in my religion of equanimity, the birds and beasts are not run down to the benefit of men. The entire living world has been viewed from a spiritual angle. Serpent Chandakausik kept stinging me and I glanced at him with compassion. At last the venomous reptile was quitened. He also experienced the stream of equanimity.'

'What is the Lord's future programme, sire?'

'It will be as it was during my years of pursuit, Gautam. The gamut of my activity is rather limited. To replace the pedestalled inequity with equity and equanimity is the be all and end all of my life.'

'My Lord, can a votary of equanimity be stern with one's own body?'

'He can't, Gautam.'

'How was it, then, that my Lord had been cruel to his body? You underwent the most rigorous penances. Was it an equnimous treatment with the body?'

'Gautam, there is nothing quizzical in it. The treatment and its quantum is dictated by the type and gravity of the disease. My prescription bore relevance to the malady and its intensity, rather than to a masochistic trait.'

'Sire, the accumulated latancies can be purged by means of meditation. Why had the Lord to resort to penances?'

'Gautam, I have no faith in a lopsided effort. Hence I combined penances with meditation. I have to instal reconciliatory spirit in place of exclusiveness.'

'My Lord, were you averse to meals?'

'Gautam, a non-relativistic language can hardly express what I mean, I ate to nourish my spiritual cultivation. I refrained to eat that which hampered me in the course. It is all relative. I seek to light the wick of relativity in the lamp of fanaticism.'

'My Lord, many are the lamps lit by the—*shramanas* in the past. What justifies a fresh lamp, sire?'

'I concede Gautam that Lord Parshwa did light the bright lamp that burns till today. But its flame is dim now. It calls for a renewed effort.'

'Sire, you lived in isolation for full twelve years. Why an order at this long last?'

'My aim is to propagate non-violence and relativity amongst the masses. It warants a mass medium. Religion owes its birth and evolution to human society and not to a vacuous wilderness.'

Then, what led you pass long years in wilderness, sir?'

'It was to fill the inner vacuum, Gautam. Until one's own vacuum is filled, one cannot succeed in filling that of others. During my spiritual practices I was practically alone. Neither I attended any congregation nor preached and organised. Rarely would I discuss philosophy, if at all I spent the fourth *chaturmas* (rainy season) of my pursuits at Champa. I stayed at the place of worship belonging to Swatidutta the Brahmin, where he kept his holy sacrificial fires. Once Swatidutta enquired of me, "What is atman My Lord?'

'That which experiences the ego (I) is the *atman* (self).'

'What are its characteristics?'

'It is subtle and imperceptible by the senses.'

'How to realise it?'

'Swatidutta began to pursue the self. Self is my sole concern. It has been the end of my pursuit and I have been time and again, driving others towards that noble endeavour.[1]

'During the second year of my pursuit I admitted a man into my discipleship. He was called Makkhaliputra Gaushalak. He accompanied me for a few years. Then he deserted me.

'I and Gaushalak had mataphysical discussions. I satisfied his queries and acquinted him with my transcendental experiences. I also imparted to him the mysteries of occult powers.'

'The subject is too intriguing to be discussed cursorily, my Lord. Pray bless me with a deeper understanding of it.'

'Gautam! Gaushalak has chosen to become a believer in destiny. It was I who once sowed the seeds of this faith in his mind.

'Gautam! Once he and I proceeded to Suwarnakhal from Kollag.[2] A few cowherds had been boiling rice in milk in the way. Gaushalak requested me to tarry there. Said I, 'The sweet dish is not destined to be cooked. The earthen pot shall be broken.'

'I moved ahead while Gaushalak stayed on. He warned the cowherds of the likely disaster. The cowherds fastened the cooking utensil with bamboo splinters. The pot was full of milk. The rice was also ample. As soon as the soaked rice swelled, the earthen pot burst into bits. The milk and rice spilled down. The first seed of fatalism was sown in the mind

---

1. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 320-321.
2. Third year of the pursuits.

of Gaushalak. He was convinced that destiny fulfill itself.[1] I shall narrate only a few of the events that occurred to convert him to this ideology.

'Once we were *enroute* to Kurmagram from Sidhpur.[2] There was a field in the way. There was a sesamum plant in it with seven flowers on its stalk. Gaushalak sought to know of me if it were to have fruition.

'It shall fructify,' said I, 'the seven flowers growing into seven seeds in one pod."

'I moved ahead, Gaushalak turned back. He visited the field and uprooted the plant in question.

'After a few days halt at Kurmagram we were going back to Sidhpur. Said Gaushalak, 'Sire! The sesamum plant has not fructified, the one you had predicted to fare well.'

'I pointed my finger at the plant and said, 'This is that very sesamum plant which I had predicted to fructify and which you uprooted.' Gaushalak disbelieved it. He approached the plant. He opened its pod. He saw seven sesamum seeds into it. He was astoutnded. He said in astonishment.

'How did it happen, sire?'

'I said, 'You had pulled the plant up by its roots. Thereafter it rained. A cow passed that way. Its hoof pressed the plant again into the soil.'

'The seed of the inevitability of destiny struck root in the mind of Gaushalak. He reverted to his habitual thinking. The destiny must fulfil itself. Death results in the reincarnation of *jivas* (individuals of different species) in their own species.[3]

'Gautam heard the Lord in rapt attention. He could vividly grasp the metaphysical intricacies of the discourse. Every subtlety of the Lord's preaching was clear to him. To further quench his curiosity he said, 'My Lord! I am keenly desirous of learning the secret powers of man that you taught to Gaushalak.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 283.

[2] Tenth year of the pursuits.

[3] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. pp. 297, 298.

The Lord reminesced, 'once we were staying at Kurmagram.[1] An ascetic Vaisyayan was doing his penances there. It was midday. He held his hand high in the air. His tresses were unkempt and flowing. He gazed at the sun. Such was the curious posture of the ascetic. Lice dropped from his dishevelled plaits of hair. He again restored the lice into their hairy nest. Gaushalak said, 'Who could this patron of lice he, sire?' The question was repeated more than once. It infuriated the ascetic. He attempted to apply *tejolabdhi* yoga to set Gaushalak on fire by his mysterious stare. Smoke emanated from his mouth. Flames could be seen inside his mouth. I was pleased to rescue my disciple from this fiery end. I countered the homicidal attempt of the Yogi by resorting to the Yogic device of concentrating on the principle of cold or *Sheet-tejolabdhi.* The sadhu was stunned at this frustration of his nefarious designs. Gaushalak was saved.[2]

'He was highly impressed with this display of occult powers. He was impatient to master this power of *Tejolabdhi.* I imparted the secret to Gaushalak. He assiduously practised the Yogic exercise and in due course commanded the occult power.'

'Could I be blessed with this secret, sire?' said the Lord, 'Gautam, one who observes two days fast alternating with a day's meal for full six months, gazes at the sun standing in its heat, breaks his fast with a handful of boiled black grams and takes a palmful of hot water achieves *Tejolabdhi.*'[3]

As the Lord's preaching continued, Gautam's devotion intensified. The marvellous past of the Master thrilled him. He said exhilarated, 'My Lord, I have caused you much inconvenience. But my urge to fill my vacuuous past is irresis-

---

1. Tenth year of the pursuits.
2. 'Bhagwati,' 15/60-68 : 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 298, 299.
3. 'Bhagawati,' 15/69, 70, 76 : 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 299.

tible. I pray, do me a little more favour. I beg to know if your Lordship had an occasion to come across any of the hundreds of monks and nuns of Parshwa tradition, since they are still extant.'

'Gautam, a few monks who had reverted to the Vedic tradition of nomadic sadhus did come across me but none subscribing to the Parshwa tradition. Gaushalak did see the monks of Acharya Nandisena of Parshwa tradition at Tambaya. Nandisena was such a one great sage, and a meditative genius. It was night and he was lost in meditation at the cross-roads. The son of the chief guard happened to see him. He took him to be a robber and committed him to death.'[1]

'How very sad, sire?'

'Well Gautam! Is slavery any-the-less reprehensible and for that matter animal sacrifice, untouchability, antifeminism and such other vices? Man is oppressed with numberless evils. These evils are only the manifestations of the inner ferment. The root cause is erroneous perspective. Some religious leaders prescribe an eradication of patent evils while I advocate the eradication of patent evils as well as their latent causes. You may give your thought to it profoundly.' So saying the Lord was lost in silence. Gautam switched his mind over from the past to the future.

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 291.

25

The Contemporary Religions and Religious Leaders

Religion had a hoary tradition in India. As its refulgence grew, the people availed of its uplifting brilliance. The noble tradition touched new heights and spread to new regions.

The *shramana* and Vedic traditions of India have an ancient beginning. The *shramana* system was evolved by the Pre-Aryan castes, and Ksatriyas. The Vedic system was evolved by the Brahmins. The two systems proliferated into various sub-sects. As the Jain authors reveal, there were no less than three-hundred and sixty-three religious systems and subsidiary systems extant. Buddhist writers mention only sixty-two religious systems and sub-systems. In Jain cononical literature all the systems have been classified into four categories.

1. *Kriyavada,*
2. *Akriyavada,*
3. *Agnanavada,*
4. *Vinayavada.*

Lord Mahavira had already studied these systems during his householdership.[1] His comparative study led him to choose *Kriyavada* for himself.

It was an era of moral resurgence. In the different parts of the world powerful religous leaders were upholding noble ethical and spiritual thoughts. The metaphysical subtleties were being unravelled by eminent thinkers like Confucious and Lao-Tze in China, Pythagoras in Greece, Zoraster in Persia and Moses in Palestine. Their Indian counterparts like the seers Svetaketu, Uddalak, Yaganavalkya were propagating the *Upanishadic* love. Many *tirthankars* like Makkhaliputra Gaushalak, Purankasyap, *Pakudhaktyayana,* Ajitkeshkambali and Sanjayavelatthiputta lit the flame of new thought. Lord Buddha was enlightened ten years after Lord Mahavira, the respective historical landmarks being 557 B.C. and 547 B.C. Lord Parshwa had already left his bodily abode. Kumarshramana Keshi still led the movement.

---

[1] 'Suyagado' 1/6/27

The Parshwa system had gained popularity in various parts of the country. Lord Parshwa was genealogically Nagavansi. Numerous monarchies or republics pertaining to this stock subscribed to his faith. It was popular amongst the Vratya Ksatriyas in the central and eastern regions. The Vazzis of Vaishali and Videh were great devotees of this faith. The family of Lord Mahavira subscribed to his system. The Lord was familiar with Parshwa tradition since his childhood. His renunciation of householdership heralded the new dawn of the *shramana* system. The installation of fourfold ethical system *sravaka, sravika, shramana* and *shramanika* was the pioneering effort to reinvigorate the system.

Lord Mahavira was deeply devoted to Lord Parshwa. He used to mention him respectfully as the vastly popular Master.[1] However, certain reasons contributed to the growing laxity in the system. The fourfold categorisation or installation of *tirthas* resulted in the regeneration of Parshwa tradition.

Lord Parshwa propounded a harmonised and equanimous conduct. Those who entered his fold avowed to equanimity. The conduct entailed the fourfold vows :—

1. Non-violence.
2. Truth,
3. Non-stealthiness,
4. Non-acquisition.

---

[1] Bhagwati 5/255.

Lord Mahavira observed that the Parshwa monks grew indifferent to the vows of continence and non-acquistion. They indulged a demonstration of occult powers like clairvoyance to enhance their glory. He detected these flaws while he was engaged in his pursuits. The *shramanas* who initiated Makhaliputra Gaushalak into the eightfold occult sciences were monks of Parshwa tradition. They were Syana, Kalanda, Karnikara. Achchhidra, Agni Vaisyayana and Arjuna son of Gomayu. They had grasped the subtleties of pleasure and pain, gain and loss and life and death. They had the virtue to make great predictions. They had, however, abandoned the Parshwa regimen and earned their livelihood by using their clairvoyance and such other occult powers[1].

The Lord took a stock of the situation and concluded that the system warranted a prompt renovation.

---

1. 'Bhagwati' 15/3-6 : Bhagwativritti leaf 659.

26

New Ideologies : New Traditions :

Lord Mahavira valued equanimity as much as did Lord-Parshwa. The Lord's first vow on the eve of his initiation was that of equanimity : the elucidation he gave to it subsequent to his enlightenement took shape as the religion of equanimity. The foremost work of his *ganadhara* was the authorship of *'samayik Sutra.'* But it was given to the Lord to elaborate these codes of conduct in the contemporary context.

There are three aspects of Samayik :

1. Equanimous perspective.
2. Equanimous knowledge.
3. Equanimous conduct.

The Lord found it unnecessary to modify the principles of equanimous perspective and equanimous knowledge. Only the equanimous conduct was modified by him.

Lord Mahavira expanded the four major observances (mahavratas) into five :—[1]

1. Non-violence,
2. Truth,
3. Non-stealthiness,
4. Continence,
5. Non-acquisition.

He as much emphasised continence and non-acquisition as non-violence. The readers of his preachings realise the significance of this novel emphasis repeatedly.

---

1. 'Bhagwati' 20/66 : Mulachar 7/36/37 Yatwarthavartika pt. 1 p. 41

Said the Lord, 'One who has successfully observed continence, has observed all other vows. One who has violated continence has violated all other vows.[1]

'Those who abstain from incontinence have the prior claim to earn deliverance.'[2]

The view of the Lord is echoed in the voice of his later followers. An Acharya writes.

'I find nothing commendable in a man rigorously observing silence and meditation, wearing barks of trees and performing penitence, if he cherishes libido, be he the creator Brahma himself.'

THE LORD'S DEVOTION TO SELF AND HIS SINGULAR GUSTO FOR CONTINENCE

Hitherto various thinkers put premium on incontinence. Certain theologians found the institution of marriage indispensable, as, according to them, progeny was essential to a suitable posthumous desert. Another group of *sanyasins* pleaded incontinence to be natural and hence innocent. They worded it like this. As one is prone to itch a sore, so it is natural to tickle the sore of wanton desire for the other sex. Lord Mahavira so vigorously opposed these licentions notions that in Post-Mahavira era it was deemed commendable to abstain from sensuality even for a householder.

Monk Gautam came to Shravasti with his disciples. Kumar Shraman Keshi was already there. Gautam halted at Kausthakh garden. Keshi camped at Tinduk garden. Their respective disciples noticed the rival group. A few doubts pestered them. 'How be it that our goals are identical and still our approaches are different? Else why the difference of four and five major observances?' The matter came to the notice of Gautam and Keshi. The doubts of their respective group warranted an immediate solution. It was decided to have a congregation.

---

1. Panhavagarnaim, 9/3.
2. Ibid 9/3.

Gautam went to Tinduk garden with his disciples. Keshi duly received them. He offered them seats. The debate started.[1]

On being questioned regarding the reason for multiplying the major observances *(Mahavratas),* Gautam said, 'The sages of the era of Lord Parshwa were immune from semantic distortions. They precisely grasped the meaning of observances. Lord Parshwa decried the craving for possessing and enjoying the mundane. Thus the sages denounced that which was non-Brahma and that which conduced to acquisition. The *milieu* is different today. Sages of today are prone to semantic fallacies. They tend to go in for literal meanings. It might be known to the readers that certain monks of this tradition choose to propagate the view that Lord Parshwa never forbade incontinence. Such a notion conduced to licentiousness. Lord Mahavira took stock of the situation and expanded the major observances to include the two other major observances of continence and non-acquisition *(Bahiddhadan Virman).* The perverse logic that was exploited to promote the tendency of incontinence was nipped in the bud by this installation of the two additional major observances *(Mahavratas.)* It is not a confusion of the religious values but is arising out of our own religion and serves as an antidote to the peculiar mode of modern thinking.[2]

Keshi's band found their faculties pepped up, having had their doubts resolved. Keshi himself was highly impressed. He saw his feeling echoed by his disciples and it was decided to join the order. It was a glorious achievement of Gautam. It was a landmark in the history of the Lord's order. This confluence with an old and noble tributary fairly widenend the span of the great stream.[3]

The followers of Lord Parshwa did not readily recognise Mahavira and his *tirthas.* Potracted disputations were held

---

1. Uttarajjhayani 23/1/22.
2. 'Uttarajjhayani' 23/23-28.
3. Ibid, 23/86, 89.

before they embraced the order. Not only that, some of the monks chose to remain outside the fold.

Gautam initiated Keshi and his disciples in the tradition of five-fold observances. It proved to be a spectacular sight for the thousands who attended the ceremony. The monks of the two sects also watched it with great interest. It was not a common event. It represented the merger of the past with the present. It also stood for the unification of the two schools of thoughts conceived by the respective pioneer monks.

The Lord treated abstention from eating at night as an observance.[1] He also ordained five-fold discretion—[2] movement, speech, meals, acceptance and keeping of utensils and replying to the calls of nature, viz.

1. *Irya*—discreet movement.
2. *Bhasha*—discreet expression.
3. *Aishana*—discreet eating.
4. *Adan niksepa*—discreet acceptance and handling of utensils.
5. *Utsarga*—discreet reply to the calls of nature.

By prescribing these five-fold cautions the Lord portrayed non-violence in its universal-aspect before the monastic order. The all-pervading meaningful character of non-violence applicable to all walks of life was presented to the order. The order began to promote non-violence most vigorously.

The Lord had a remarkable faculty to observe the minutest things. The first duty of a preceptor after initiating a disciple was to make him alive to the minutest occurrences.

Meghkumar was the son of king Shrenik. He sought initiation by the Lord. Meghkumar thus prayed to the Lord, 'My Lord! I invoke your grace to initiate me into the path of self-restraint.'

The Lord imparted to him the non-violent way of conducting oneself while walking, sitting, standing, sleeping, eating and speaking.[1] Human life is ennobled by one's capacity to deal with the commonplace situations. This truth is reflected in the concept of the respective modes of asceticism.

---

[1] 'Dasvealiyam' 6/25.

[2] 'Uttarajjhayani' 24/1, 2.

The Lord prescribed the threefold restraints or *Guptis*:[2]

1. Restraint of mind—prevention of the influx of thoughts or keeping the mind thought-free.
2. Restraint of speech—a suppression of utterance of silence.
3. Restraint of body—Keeping the body steady, keeping it relaxed and discarding possessive notions of one's body.

The Lord felt that non-violence, truth, continence etc. are the rewards of the cultivation of self-restraint. To achieve these virtues suitable means should be carefully adopted and practised.

A sensible cultivation of cautious speech and sparing and restrained utterance constitute truth in life.

A wise cultivation of *Irya* (discreet movement) *Aishana* (discreet eating) and bodily and mental control orientate life in non-violence.

Bodily and mental control, when properly cultivated, orientate life in continence.

Lord Mahavira elaborated the four-fold code of conduct of Lord Parshwa into the thirteen-fold code :[3]

1. Non-violence,
2. Truth,
3. Non-stealthiness,
4. Continence,
5. Non-acquisition,
6. Discreet movement,
7. Discreet utterance,
8. Discreet eating,
9. Discreet behaviour,
10. Discreet reply to the call of nature,

---

[1] 'Nayadhammakahao' 1/150.

[2] 'Uttarajjhiyani', 24/1, 2.

[3] 'Charitrabhakti of Pujyapada,' Verse 7.

11. Mental control,
12. Verbal control,
13. Oral control.

There were two obvious advantages of this code :—

1. The laxity observed amongst the disciples of Lord Parshwa was checked.
2. The inner elements that conduced to this laxity were held in check.

Lord Mahavira denounced those traits of the monks, householders and Vedic monks that went against the grain of the time-honoured principle of non-violence. The Lord, thus, proved to be a saviour of all the three systems.

Some of the scholars like to ascribe to Lord Mahavira the pioneering role of revolutionising the religious practices of sacrificial and other rites and propounding Jainism. Facts slightly vary from this view. Indeed, the Lord was born in the *shramana* tradition. The light of this star shone untrammelled by traditions. The tradition, indeed, borrowed light from this star. The question of his granting sanction or otherwise to the Vedas and Brahminism is wide off the mark as the shramana tradition had already derecognized these. *Shramana* and Vedic schools rose independently in India. Both were sister schools rather than either giving birth to the other.

Lord Mahavira sought to effect a reconciliation. He desired a patching up of the Brahmin-Ksatriya animosity of a long standing. He did give a preferential treatment to the Brahmins not as a caste but as individuals. He had no bias in favour of a particular caste.

THE CLARION-CALL OF REVOLUTION :

Like light and darkness, the true and the false have lasted here since the beginning of the creation. There is no age embodying either light or darkness exclusively. Even today the forces of light are extant and even during Mahavira's days the dark forces existed. The Lord was instrumental in emitting the refulgence of truth and light along the vast horizons. The creation was uplifted with a new glow.

Lord Mahavira revolutionised the prevalent mode of thinking by installing non-violence on the pedestal of equity and eqanimity. Non-violence was a principle—acceptable to Vedic school and *shramana* school equally. But the traditional non-violence of the Vedic thinkers was more canon-ridden. Inequality alongwith its evil ingredients was allowed to pollute the concept.

1. Casteism :

One of the vicious constituents of inequity was the riveting of caste with birth. A Brahmin was superior by virtue of his birth and an untouchable low on that very account. People who could understand the quintessence of spiritualism condemned casteism.

To quote Yagnavalkya from 'Brihadaranyak' "A saint well-grounded in Brahma alone is a true Brahmin". But the voice in support of this rational view was too feeble to be heard in the uproarious din of casteism. It was, again, Lord Mahavira who raised the voice to a pitch as to be audible to all and sundry. The Lord propounded the principle of caste based not on birth but on the deeds of one.

In the Lord's order the slaves, the untouchables and the low-caste people were initiated, thus winning the status hitherto reserved for the high-caste Brahmins. The Lord described the order as a laboratory wherein one experimented to eradicate the conceits bred by one's caste or sub-caste. In the present context we may not appreciate the rationale of making such experiments in an order. But twenty-five centuries ago casteism was taken for granted. It was accepted as something natural. Many saints exulted in their caste and subcaste with gusto. The forum of religion itself lent strength to this invidious discrimination. Hence from the same forum of religion this inequanimity and inequity was to be denounced. Lord Mahavira took upon himself this task of promoting equity.

The movement of equity rose to new heights, thanks to the superb leadership provided by the Lord.

It was incumbent upon every one who joined the order to embrace the observance of equanimity *(samayika)* and still they very often found themselves unequal to the task of purging themselves of their latencies.

(1) Once a few Jain monks appeared before the Lord and said, 'My Lord! We have been admitted to the fold of your holy order. We have been initiated into the order of equanimity. And still it is so, sire, that some of our colleagues exult in their caste and genealogy and extol it!'

The Lord welcomed the group of monks and said, 'You have joined the holy order. Are you aware of it saintly being?'

'We are, sire.'

'Are you aware of the order in which you were thus initiated?'

'We are sire. We have been initiated into your holy order.'

'Do you know which order I have propounded?'

'We know my Lord. Your Holiness has propounded the holy order of equanimity.[1]

'Holy Beings! Is it permissible in the order of equanimity to exult in one's caste?'

'No my Lord, it is not permissible. However, our latencies die hard.'

The Lord exhorted them thus :

'If the Brahmin, Ksatriya, Ugraputra or Lichchhavi initiated into my holy order of equanimity still subscribe to castes and exult therein, they behave like unregenerate beings.

'May such a one apply his mind to the issue. Can a *shramana* be supposed to boast of his caste and genealogy when he subsists on begged food?'[2]

(2) Questioned a monk 'Then my Lord! Dont we own any caste distinction?'

---

[1] 'Suyagado', 1/2/6.

[2] Ibid 1/13/10, 11.

'None whatsoever.'

'How be it, sire?'

'Pray, let me know what the goal in life happens to be.'

'Liberation.'

'What shall your caste distinction be then?'

'That stage cannot be labelled with a caste, sire.'

'The caste—branded cannot be bracketed with the casteless. Hence I aver, you are casteless : you transcend the caste.'

The Lord addressed himself to the monks thus : 'A monk of your order ought to shun all vanity in his superior knowledge, austerities, caste and livelihood. one free from these vanities alone transcends castes and achieves the supreme state of casteless deliverance!'[1]

(3) People from all the castes joined the Lord's order. During those days the people were addressed by their names combined with the caste surname. The vainglory of those who were addressed with superior caste surnames was aroused. People labelled with mean castes were remorseful. Vainglory and mean feeling both are high-water marks of inequity. The Lord would not stand either. Once the Lord invited all the monks and thus addressed them—'Worthy beings! Take it as my command that henceforth no monk address another by the latter's caste.'[2]

(4) As the Lord's movement of eqanimity gathered momentum the dragon of casteism put out its fangs. New corollaries of inequity came into play. The bogey of divine sanction was raised to enfeeble the voice of equanimity.

The monks who swore by the sanctity of man were not behind in making their creed felt. The message of Buddha was also resounding across the length and breadth of the continent. The creed of the monks was welcome like the first showers to the inequity-torn humanity. High-caste people were equally enthused. Ksatriyas had already become one

---

1. Ibid, 1/13/15, 16.
2. Ibid, 1/9/27.

with the movement. The Brahmins and the Vaisyas also felt inclined to join it. The religious movement virtually became a popular movement. However, it was left to the monks to propagate it. The Lord carefully continued to tone up their activities in this regard.

Once the monks discussed amongst themselves that unless the ceremony of initiation implied condemnation of body how can the caste be deemed to be condemnable.? The Lord came to know of this debate. He summoned the group and preached—'Aryans, have you seen a snake's slough?'

'We have, sire.'

'Do you know noble beings, how it affects the snake?'

'Sire, when slough covers it, the snake ceases to see!'

'And Aryans! caste is like a slough on human body. It blinds the human being. He regains his sight only after discarding the slough. That's why I exhort the saints to shed caste as a snake does its slough. He should never take pride in his caste. He should never be scornful to anybody on that account.'[1]

(5) The mode of greeting was duly prescribed in the order. It was so ordained that the junior monk was required to pay respects to the one senior in initiation. It posed a problem to a monk once. He abdicated to embrace monkhood. One of his servants had sought initiation even before he did. The monarch-turned monk was obsessed with his high origin. He did not greet the servant-turned monk. The Lord came to know of it. The Lord summoned the monks and thus addressed them : 'In a social order a person might be a monarch, another servant and a third servant to a servant. However, once one joins my holy order one ceases to be a monarch or a servant. The external appendages having been discarded, the initiated beings attain a status where all are equal without any distinction whatsoever. Hence none need be ashamed of respecting a senior monk. The soul shall be installed in

---

[1] 'Suyagado', 1/2/23, 24.

equanimity only after erasing the sentimental relics of having been a monarch or a servant.[1]

The monarch-turned monk was ridden of his ego. His ex-servant was now his co-religious brother.

Under the Lord's guidance the holy order was stamped with an absolute distinctionless unity. A thousand beings resounded it in one voice. The malady of ego that afflicated them was gone. The principle can be represented thus:

'The *jiva* (individual soul) has experienced high and low castes more than once in different incarnations. Hence none is lower nor higher than another. Once realizing this truth that the soul has passed through various vicissitudes of incarnations who would believe in casteism or put premium over his caste?'[2]

The Lord thus, sowed the seed of equanimity in the order, watered and tended it to see it bloom with leaves, flowers and fruit.

The Lord generated an immense faith in the principle with the result that it was echoed the world over.

Jayaghosh wandered alone his way to Varanasi. He learnt that Vijayaghosh was engaged in a sacrificial rite. He visited the venue of the rites. The disciples of Mahavira used to register their impatience with sacrificial rites regularly in a non-violent manner. Even Brahmin monks were showing interest in the movement. Jayaghosh was Brahmin by caste. Vijayaghosh was also a Brahmin. One was the master of the ceremonies and the other its virulent opponent. One was a great propounder of casteism and the other its denouncer.

Shramana and vedic are not two separate castes. These are the twin branches of a single caste-tree. The difference between them is not caste-oriented but principle-oriented. Ksatriyas led the *shramanic* movement and Brahmins the Vedic. And still a good number of Brahmins chose to merge themselves in the *shraman* stream. Similarly numerous Ksatriyas joined the Vedic throng. Religious conversion during those days was a matter of personal conviction. It had no social repercussions. If conversions were to be equated with caste-conversion it would have far-reaching consequences. In fact, the members of the same Indian national caste practised different faiths and hence conversion had no more than an intellectual import. Caste structure was impervious to it.

---

[1] Ibid, 1/2/25.

[2] 'Ayaro', 2/49, 50.

Vijayaghosh was engrossed with ideological disparities. He emphatically said, "Monk,! Don't hope to get any alms in this arena of rites. Better proceed elsewhere. The victuals here are meant exclusively for Brahmins who have mastered Vedas and theology!

Said the monk, 'Vijayaghosh! I am less anxious about alms than about your ignorance of the meaning of the term Brahmin.'

Vijayaghosh, 'What is mysterious about it? The one born in a genealogical-tree that hailed from the head of Brahma is Brahmin.'

'Jayaghosh, I declaim your thesis as patently wrong. Caste owes itself to deeds and not to birth.[1]

'Man is Brahmin by virtue of his deeds. So are Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra.'

Vijayaghosh, 'What are the deeds befitting a Brahmin?'

Jayaghosh, 'A Brahmin should practice continence that leads to Brahma.[2] One who conducts oneself along the path leading to Brahma is Brahmin. Like a lotus in water, if one stays intact of the libido to which one owes one's birth, one is verily a Brahmin.[3] One who is free of attachment, repulsion and fear and glitters thereby like purified gold is Brahmin.[4] One who is non-violent, truthful and humble is Brahmin.'[5]

---

[1] 'Uttarajjhayani', 25/31.

[2] Ibid, 25/30.

[3] Ibid, 25/26.

[4] Ibid. 25/21.

[5] Ibid 25/22, 23, 27.

Vijayaghosh was converted to this ideology. He subscribed to the principle of deed-oriented caste.

Harikesha was an untouchable. He embraced monastic life. He was staying at Varanasi for a short while during his wanderings. One Rudradeo Purohit arranged for a sacrificial rite. Harikesha visited the place. Rudradeo insulted the monk. However, the latter was not perturbed at this cool reception. The two debated the issue at length. During it Rudradeo observed, 'Monk! A Brahmin combining his high-caste with his learning alone is the repository of the gamut of moral virtues.'[1]

The monk contended it saying, 'The Brahmins suffering from the evils of wrath, vanity, violence, falsehood, kleptomania and acquisition have fallen from their station indicative of their caste and learning. They are no more repositories of virtues.[2]

'You are a beast of bookish burden. You have crammed Vedas without comprehending these. The aspirants who practise equanimity even in adverse circumstances are Brahmins and repositories of virtue in the true sense!'[3]

Rudradeo found the plea unpalatable. He attempted to cow down the monk. But the austerities had given to the monk such a glorified aura that the disciples of Rudradeo were flabbergasted. They all realized :

Austerities will asert themselves.
Castes are myths of no virtue.
Whose halo dumbfounded Rudradeo's students. That Harikesa was a mere untouchable by birth.[4]

Evidently, the era when Lord Mahavira lived was dominated by casteism and vanity. It was a Herculean task to fight these evils. One had to put one's life on stake to go against the grain of the *milieu.* Lord Mahavira orientated numerous

---

1. Ibid. 12/13.
2. Ibid. 12/14.
3. Ibid. 12/15.
4. Ibid. 12/37.

monks to develop an elevated moral consciousness capable of taking life and death equally in its stride. Such beings of refined moral calibre rendered the supposedly invincible citadel of casteism perfectly vulnerable.

2. Monastic norms :—

The era was predominantly religious. Monkhood was deemed to be prestigious. *Shramanic* tradition put a premium on monkhood. It had an influence on Vedic tradition also. The latter began to treat *sanyasa* or renunciation of householdership with utmost respect.

There were thousands of *sadhus* in different sects then. A hallowed practice naturally evokes a widespread couriosity. Monkhood fascinated everybody. But monkhood is not easy to practise. It is an odyssey to vanquish the senses, the mind and the thoughts. Only such rare aspirants succeed in the venture who are resolute and devoted to self-exploration.

Lord Mahavira observed that a number of shramana and Vedic saints were leading a virtually householder's life albeit in a monk's garb.

They lacked a thirst for knowledge, a desire for realisation of truth, an enterprize to realize the self and an inborn urge for spiritual escalation. How could they be dubbed as saints? He revealed the shortcomings of the monastic order. Said he:

'Tonsuring won't make one a *shramana*; Chanting 'Om' won't make one a Brahmin. jungle sojourn won't make one a hermit.'

'Equanimity makes one a *shramana,* continence makes one a Brahmin, knowledge makes one a monk, austerities make one a hermit.[1]

'Just as an empty palm and a spurious coin are worthless, similarly a monk without observances has no merit. A glittering piece of glass cannot deceive the experienced eye of a gemmologist who can instantaneously distinguish it from a gem.'[2]

---

1. 'Uttarajjhayani' 25/29, 30.
2. Ibid. 20/42.

An individual enquired of the Lord, 'Sire! Are the two things, the monkhood and its external marks bear any relationship with each other?'

Said the Lord, 'How could I say that the two are unrelated? External marks reflect the inner sentiments of an individual. When one cultivates stoic tolerance alongwith desirelessness, one may discard all garbs. The monastic garblessness is indicative of his utterly simple and unadorned feeling.

'However, there are individuals who discard garbs without attaining tolerance and desirelessness. Thus what use the external marks and the garb?

'It ought not to win any recognition. However, there ought to be some original source after which the outward marks are modelled. The garb and physical marks essentially reflect one's mental and moral constitution. It is this which is thus represented and hence it cannot be asserted that the outward marks and inner sainthood are unrelated.

'I classify human beings in four categories :—

1. Some individuals retain the garb and the symbols but discard the monkhood.
2. Some individuals retain the monkhood but discard the garb and the symbols.
3. Some individuals retain, both outward marks and monkhood.
4. Some individuals discard, both outward marks and monkhood.[1]

Another person present there asked, 'Sir! Hordes of people wander about the vast expanse of the country in monastic garbs. We fail to discern the genuine monks among them from the fake ones.'

Said the Lord, 'I endorse what you allege. Numerous impersonators roam about as monks. Gullible folks pay them honours due for monks. But those who can discern refuse to confer monkhood on them.'

---

[1] 'Thanam' 4/419.

'Who are termed as monks by such knowledgeable beings, sir?'

Said the Lord, 'Adept at knowledge and wisdom.
Engaged in austerities and penances.
The ones accomplished thus,
Are termed as monks by the wise.'[1]

The Vedic tradition esteemed householdership and the *shraman* one monkhood. Spiritual pursuit does not borrow its existence from outward marks. It owes its existence to restraint.

Abhayakumar enquired of the Lord, 'Sire! Pray let me know which of the two is superior, a monk or a householder.'

Said the Lord, 'I pronounce restraint as covetable. Householder and monk, both, excel if austere. Indulgent householder and monk, both, are reprehensible.'

'Are *shramanas* also indulgent, sire?'

'The inner light blesses neither all the monks,
Nor all the householders.
There be many austere householders;
Monks are inequal in austerity;
Householders may excel over some monks.
Monks excel over all householders.'[2]

The Lord extolled austerity so highly that the external marks and the garb lost all relevance. Monkhood was installed in the evershining moral light instead of its accepted outward marks.

3. Spirituality and Religion :—

Were possible for the flame to exist without the lamp, for the fruit without the peeling and for the knowledge without the language, spirituality could have existed shorn of religion. The situation is inconceivable. If spiritualism be the flame, religion is its lamp. If spiritualism be the pulp of the fruit, re-

---

1. 'Dasvealiyam' 7/48, 49.
2. 'Uttarajjhayani' 5/19, 20

ligion is its skin. If spiritualism be the meaning, religion is its verbal expression.

In the event of the religion preponderating and thus dwarfing the spiritualism, the gross lamp, the peeling and the letter outvalue the flame, the spirit and the core of knowledge. Such was the plight during the Lord's age. Religious format smothered the spiritual core. The cinders of spiritualism were dimmed by the overlying religious ashes. The Lord redeemed the spiritualism from the tryranny of religion and thus awarded it a broad perspective.

Enquired Gautam, 'Sire! Pray elucidate what the perennial *dharma* is'.

Said the Lord, 'Non-violence is the perennial *dharma*.[1]
The sages that were in the past,
And the ones who will come hence,
All draw sustenance from non-violence,
As do creatures from the mother earth!'[2]

Sire! Some thinkers assert—"It is our religion that harbours *dharma* and no other." Is it true my Lord?

'Gautam! Beware of the preaching—'Seek refuge in my religion if you desire deliverance. There is no alternative to it!' "Such rigid equation of religious sects and deliverance is a sectarian dogmatism. Such fanatics can at best induce fanaticism amongst others rather than the true spiritualism.'[3]

'Is it not true my Lord that embracing *shramanic* religion is an open sesame to deliverance and no other?'

'Gautam! Spiritualism does not inhere in particular names and forms. It inheres in its own essence. Reality we may hold that an individual abiding by spirituality alone can be religious.'

'Then sir, is there no independence between *dharma* and religion?'

---

1. 'Ayaro' 4/1, 2.
2. 'Suyagado' 1/11/36.
3. Ibid 1/1/73.

'Gautam! If *dharma* and religion be inalienable, how one unschooled in religion can become *kevali* (enlightened)?'

'What kind such a one be, sire?'

'One never joining a fold of religion, and never imparted with the fundamentals of religion may elevate himself to great moral heights and become enlightened and omniscient.'

'Is it possible my Lord?'

'Verily so, Gautam! That's why I assert that no religion can monopolise *dharma*. Vividly do I observe these truths!

1. There are certain householders who attain deliverance in that mode of living.
2. There are certain others who don monastic robes to attain deliverance;
3. There are still others who embrace monastic robes prescribed in other sects to attain deliverance.

'When deliverance is attainable in diverse robes and religious modes of life how can *dharma* and particular religions be deemed as inseparable?'

Gautam tilted the trend. 'Sire! if no religious sect is indispensable to *dharma* what would induce one to enter a fold?'

Said the Lord, 'Life is essentially diverse.
There is a variety of individual traits.
Some people hanker after sects but shun *dharma*.
Others clamour for *dharma* but ignore the sects.
Still others avidly crave for the sect and *dharma*.
And still others abhor, both the sect and *dharma*.'[1]

None can stamp uniformity on individual proclivities which inevitably display diversity. Men evince a variety of inclinations. A religious sect divorced from *dharma* is grossly misconceived.

Lord Mahavira had comprehended non-violence in its profoundest depths. Hence he was absolutely immune from all traces of fanaticism. If an individual, having not realized the identity of soul, seeks to serve religion, he at best serves ligion is its skin. If spiritualism be the meaning, religion is its verbal expression.

---

[1] 'Thanam' 4/420.

In the event of the religion preponderating and thus dwarfing the spiritualism, the gross lamp, the peeling and the letter outvalue the flame, the spirit and the core of knowledge. Such was the plight during the Lord's age. Religious format smothered the spiritual core. The cinders of spiritualism were dimmed by the overlying religious ashes. The Lord redeemed the spiritualism from the tryranny of religion and thus awarded it a broad perspective.

Enquired Gautam, 'Sire! Pray elucidate what the perennial *dharma* is'.

Said the Lord, 'Non-violence is the perennial *dharma*.[1]
The sages that were in the past,
And the ones who will come hence,
All draw sustenance from non-violence,
As do creatures from the mother earth!'[2]

Sire! Some thinkers assert—"It is our religion that harbours *dharma* and no other." Is it true my Lord?

'Gautam! Beware of the preaching—'Seek refuge in my religion if you desire deliverance. There is no alternative to it!' "Such rigid equation of religious sects and deliverance is a sectarian dogmatism. Such fanatics can at best induce fanaticism amongst others rather than the true spiritualism.'[3]

'Is it not true my Lord that embracing *shramanic* religion is an open sesame to deliverance and no other?'

'Gautam! Spiritualism does not inhere in particular names and forms. It inheres in its own essence. Reality we may hold that an individual abiding by spirituality alone can be religious.'

'Then sir, is there no independence between *dharma* and religion?'

---

1. 'Ayaro' 4/1, 2.
2. 'Suyagado' 1/11/36
3. Ibid 1/1/73.

'Gautam! If *dharma* and religion be inalienable, how one unschooled in religion can become *kevali* (enlightened)?'

'What kind such a one be, sire?'

'One never joining a fold of religion, and never imparted with the fundamentals of religion may elevate himself to great moral heights and become enlightened and omniscient.'

'Is it possible my Lord?'

'Verily so, Gautam! That's why I assert that no religion can monopolise *dharma.* Vividly do I observe these truths!

1. There are certain householders who attain deliverance in that mode of living.
2. There are certain others who don monastic robes to attain deliverance;
3. There are still others who embrace monastic robes prescribed in other sects to attain deliverance.

'When deliverance is attainable in diverse robes and religious modes of life how can *dharma* and particular religions be deemed as inseparable?'

Gautam tilted the trend. 'Sire! if no religious sect is indispensable to *dharma* what would induce one to enter a fold?'

Said the Lord, 'Life is essentially diverse.
There is a variety of individual traits.
Some people hanker after sects but shun *dharma.*
Others clamour for *dharma* but ignore the sects.
Still others avidly crave for the sect and *dharma.*
And still others abhor, both the sect and *dharma.*'[1]

None can stamp uniformity on individual proclivities which inevitably display diversity. Men evince a variety of inclinations. A religious sect divorced from *dharma* is grossly misconceived.

Lord Mahavira had comprehended non-violence in its profoundest depths. Hence he was absolutely immune from all traces of fanaticism. If an individual, having not realized the identity of soul, seeks to serve religion, he at best serves the communal ends rather than the spiritual one. One inspired by identity of soul on the other hand, cares more for spiritual gains. For sectarian considerations, Lord Mahavira did recognise religious and sectarian values but not at the cost of spiritual values. Religious leaders reserving the open sesame of deliverance for votaries of their own sect to the extermination of others are not non-violent from Mahavira's angle of vision. They are, in fact, stuck up in the morass of moral confusion.

---

[1] 'Thanam' 4/420.

The Lord extolled non-sectarianism by upholding the principle of accessibility of deliverance to one unlettered in religion.

His assertion that induction into any religion may serve for the ultimate accomplishment of deliverance establishes that each religion has the competence to lead to deliverance provided the aspirant is steadfast in spiritualism.

Conversely, no religion can ensure deliverance unless the aspirant is well-grounded in spiritualism.

The Lord firmly established the non-sectarian character of spiritualism transcending the bournes of sectarian religions.

Lord Mahavira heralded monasticism. He attached a great value to monasticism as a means of deliverance and still his ultimate emphasis lay on truth rather than on any regulation or regimentation.

Then, was not the Lord's principle that deliverance is within the competence of a householder an open challenge to the indispensability of monasticism for attaining this *summun bonum?* If a householder can obtain liberation where is the indispensability of a particular religious garb and pattern of living?'

Any moment may trigger off the process of elevation of human life by virtue of all—pervasive Truth at any place.

The Lord's disclosure of this great truth revealed *dharma* as pervasive as space itself.

The principle of *Pratyeka Buddha* was equally a revolt against the sectarian approach to life. Such ones do not seek initiation under the aegis of any particular religion. They win enlightenment by virtue of their wisdom. The Lord recognised such mighty beings equivalent in all respects to their counterparts of the Lord's order.

Mahavira's four concepts—

1. Uninitiated enlightened,
2. Availability of enlightenment to initiates of an alien order,
3. Householder enlightened and
4. *Pratyeka Buddha*—

shattered the dogma that reserved the privilege of deliverance to the votaries of one particular sect only. During the Lord's day there existed scores of religious sects. Some of these schools subscribed to the concept of time-bound creation. The two opposite camps arraigned each other relentlessly resulting in either of the two situations :

1. Glorification of one's own sect and running down of other sects,
2. Dogmatism—a non-relativistic insistence on one's faith to the exclusion of another's perspective.

The Lord dealt with both the situations with his relativism. It emhasises that everything has numberless characters and can be seen from countless stances.

Questioned Gautam—'Sire! Why do the votaries of religion idolise their own faith to the detriment of another's?'

Said the Lord, 'Gautam! People who are dogmatic deem their own angle of vision as absolute. Others' observation fails to convince them. This biased approach leads them to commend their own sect and belittle that of others.'

'Is it proper, my Lord?'

Said the Lord, 'The ones upholding their own view.
And denouncing other's view, affect wisdom,
And labour under fallacies.'[1]

He again said, 'Those who keep hammering their own point,
Are hardly profound in matters moral.

---

[1] 'Suyagado', 1/1/50.

They hardly, if ever, attain deliverance, like a bird encaged.
Suffering on in its perennial cage.'[1]

4. Dharma and Wam-marg :—

Wam-marg has a hoary tradition in religious history. Its votaries did not accept the existence of soul. They did not much care for *dharma* either. However, *dharma* had been widely recognised and the masses paid deference to it.

The *Wam-margies** polluted the holy *dharma* with their sensual ways. The masses were drawn towards these unholy practices. Man is instinctively driven towards such licentiousness. If indulgence is presented in the garb of religion this temptation becomes still more irresistible.

Instinct rarely guides one towards austerity. The pleasures of the moment always override the concern for the future.

The monks roaming about in their spiritual pursuits in the remote forests of Kamroop prayed to the Lord, 'Sire, our message of austerity goes unheeded in the permissive vogue of *Wam-marga*. We seek guidance from the Lord.'

Said the Lord, 'By depedestalling the sensual practices garbed in religious significance can we remedy the evil, I beseech you to lend support to the voice of virtue:

As the draught of hemlock,
Clumsily handled weapon,
Unincanted imp,
Cause the ruin extreme;
So does spiritual course,
Wedded to sensual creed.'[2]

5. The Orientation of the Spiritual Regimen :—

Happiness works a hypnotic charm on each of us. None volunteers for unhappiness. However, the pursuit of happiness is not unattended with toil and travail. The farmer earns a rich harvest by the dint of hard labour. Such is the rule that there is no reward without its toil some prelude.

---

[1] Ibid 1/1/49.

*Literally leftists in religion, worshipping *Shakti* cult and allowing orgies as a ritual.

[2] 'Uttarajjhayani' 20/44.

Can one, then, hope to attain self-realisation without the prerequisite of exertion? If it were possible why would one not attain it spontaneously? Why would so much disputation be warranted then?

There is a view that Lord Mahavira enunciated a path entailing immense toil. Even if it be conceded, the fact remains that toil as such is neither a means nor an end in itself in his system. It is non-violence that gives impetus to his system and it is again the sole aim of it. To prevail upon violence is a herculean task. Violence seems to be in the very blood of man. It is natural that at every step it should assert itself.

Mahavira never prompted people towards masochism. He only exhorted them to suffer bravely the discomforts with which the spiritual path is fraught.[1]

The Lord himself suffered austerities not as a masochist but to enfeeble and dissolve the cumulative latencies. He professed relative view of things. Why would he dogmatically uphold the doctrine of austerity as the absolute means of fighting latencies without an alternative? He commended meditation more than austerity. It's a well-known aphorism of his that a couple of minutes' meditation is more efficacious than a couple of days' fasting.

To him austerity is the external means and meditation the internal one. His system calls for meditation as much as for austerity. Neither is complete in itself. Both are efficacious in their own way.

Certain pursuants of austerities expiated in an unwise manner. They would lie down over iron-nails. Their bodies would bleed profusely.[2] Certain other monks of masochistic creed surrounded themselves with fires during intense summers and stood in chilly waters of the river during severe winters. The Lord pronounced these pursuits as half-baked and inimical to life.

---

[1] 'Dasvealiyam' 8/27.

[2] Ibid 9/3/6.

If masochism was the essence of spiritualism why would he denounce such practices as lying on a bed of thorns?

Once Gautam questioned, 'Sire, is masochism spiritual?'

'I won't call it spiritual!

'Then, is it anti-spiritual?'

'I won't call it anti-spiritual, either.'

'How shall we describe it, then?'

'An ailing person takes bitter drugs. Will it be proper to call it unwise? A man in fever takes sumptuous meals. Will it be proper to call it wise? Drugs aim at curing the ailment. If a sweet salve can cure disease, why take a bitter one? If it cannot, one has no option but to take bitter one. Rich food is nourishing to the body but in fever it is contra-indicated. To torture one's self is not spiritual. Spiritualism is a purging of the latencies.'

Said Gautam, 'Do such possibilities exist:

1. Grave discomfort and high sublimation,
2. Grave discomfort and little sublimation,
3. Little discomfort and high sublimation,
4. Little discomfort and little sublimation?

Said the Lord, 'It can be so.'

'How it be so?'

Said the Lord, (I). A noble pursuant suffers great discomfort and is rewarded with a high degree of sublimation.

(2) An individual self suffering internal existence suffers much without an equivalent sublimation.

(3) A meditative genius suffers little and still attains a high degree of sublimation.

(4) Gods suffer nothing and still attain a nominal sublimation.'[1]

---

[1] 'Bhagwai' 6/15, 16.

The Lord would not equate masochism with the consequent degree of purification. To a query from him the Lord once said, 'Torture to oneself is not material. What is material is the high degree of purification.'[1]

On a request for further elucidation, the Lord added—

'Gautam! There are two fabrics—one coloured with a fast dye and another coloured with a washable dye. Which of the two would be bleached with difficulty and which one easily?'

'Sire, The one dyed with a fast dye shall be difficult to bleach.'

'Gautam! The unrelenting latencies of an internal and mean existence persist. Hence even the severest austerities fail to purge these.'

'Sire, the cloth dyed with a washable dye washes easily.'

'Gautam! The binding latencies of an austere soul are loose and hence nominal austerities purge him.'

'How shall it be explained, sire?'

'What happens when dry hay is committed to flames?'

'It is reduced to ashes in no time.'

'What happens when a drop of water is dropped over a red-hot pan?'

'It is burnt off in a jiffy.'

'Similar is the case with the latencies of a saintly soul. They burn off easily.'[2]

The Lord evolved the spiritual regimen for *shramanas* and at the same time accepted the refined versions of the regimen of other schools. The touchstone was non-violence as ever. The tradition upheld self-mortification. The Lord did not expressly denounce self-mortification but he purged it of the elements of violence.

The Lord included self-mortification as an austerity. But according to him its object is not the torturing of the body or

---

1. Ibid 6/1.
2. Ibid 6/4.

starving oneself. It aims at developing physical and mental powers by virtue of sitting steadfastly in suitable postures etc.

Lord Mahavira's path lay beyond self-mortification as well as indulgence. Certain philosophers of the day pleaded that a like effect follows a like cause. Good result cannot follow an evil action and *vice-versa*. Causing bodily pain cannot yield happiness.

Other scholars held otherwise. They believed—'If the present life is spent in expiration the subsequent incarnation will offer us a happy existence. Mortification is followed by pleasurable rewards as a youth spent in relentless industry yields riches for a happy old age.'

Mahavira supported neither of the two schools. Again, he refuted neither. He would not endorse nor discard any exclusive view. He reconciled happiness with unhappiness.

Said the Lord, 'I believe in cause and effect. Happiness should result from happiness. One is prone to ask—"What is happiness?" The simple answer is—"That which is desirable is happiness and that which is undesirable is unhappiness."

According to Mahavira such ones are inimical to their body, senses and mind who :

1. starve in the hope of obtaining rich foods in the next incarnation;'
2. renounce family life in the hope of being blessed with a flourishing large family in the next incarnation;
3. give up riches in the hope of being rewarded with these in the next life;
4. stay celibate in the hope of winning the amorous company of divine damsels in the next incarnation;
5. renounce the pleasures of life in the hope of winning the same thousandfold in the next incarnation.

Such austerities are nothing but a torment to oneself.[1]

There are certain beings who give up these indulgences with a view to renounce that which does not belong to them.

---

[1] 'Bhagwai' 8/296.

Such a practice is enlivened with the spiritual tincture and is no more a torture. Renunciation is in itself a source of happiness and hence such beings earn the fruit of satisfaction. Such an abstinence implies discomforts which again lend happiness to the individual. Hence the emotion of pain may sometimes cause the reverse of it in actual effect.

6. The Language of the People for the People :—

The glory of a plant lies in its flower and of the latter in its stamen. It is through the stamen that the plant and the flower find an expanse in the wide wide world. Similarly does the man find expanse into the wide wide world. If the flower of his contemplation is not crowned with apt expression, his contact with life around is snapped.

It is through the words that man communicates with the world. Silent communion is a rare phenomenon. The communication through gesticulation is also limited. It is through words that man expresses himself. Language has one purpose to fulfil and that is to bridge the inner world of the speaker with that of the addressee. Language has a functional utility. Initially, utility aspect is predominant. Gradually alliterative and figurative functions make their presence felt. When the native function of the language retains its original fervour and its grace is spontaneous, no embellishment is warranted. Gradually, when the primal glow is lessened, a language tends to seek embellishment. There came an era when the language was reduced to more embellishment. That which was created to communicate became a status—symbol. Sanskrit became the sole mode for the pedants, a language far removed from the common folk. Consequently two clear-cut classes emerged—the literary expressionists called pundits and the common vernacularists. The language of the class-conscious scholars signified status, while the language of common parlance was looked down upon.

Lord Mahavira sought to awaken each individual. The means was to communicate with each individual. The pedantic language was hardly suitable for the purpose. Hence the Lord chose the common language as his medium of expression.

Prakrit means the natural language or the language of the masses. The Lord spoke in popular tongue for the benefit of the people, hence he was instantaneously owned by the people as their master. Children, females and illiterate folk were also amenable to the message. They were enlightened by the Lord's gospel.

Mahavira did not have any divine message to convey. That's why the common language served his purpose well. Some pundits of the age claimed to deliver God's word on earth. How could common language be a suitable medium for this hallowed purpose? Such esoteric ideas can be garbed in a language incomprehensible to the common people. In case it be comprehensible to the masses how would a coterie monopolize this wisdom? Mahavira terminated this monopoly. He presented the perennial truths of philosophy garbed in the popular language. Spiritualism was within everybody's reach. Earlier it was prohibited to the females and the untouchables to study the scriptures. Thanks to the liberal outlook of Mahavira, they regained their right to study these holy works.

The message of the Lord that linguistic fanaticism is a hurdle in human progress is as relevant today as it was in the contemporary age.[1]

7. The Principle of Love and Vegetarianism :—

Shraman Ardrakumar satisfied the queries of a *dandi* (Vedantic monk) and thence moved where Mahavira was present. An ascetic, Hasti by name, stopped him in the way and said, 'It is good Ardrakumar that you defeated these Vedantic monks in arguments. These monks live on roots and fruit and in the process destroy numerous minute lives. We on the other hand, abstain from such violent acts.'

'How do you live then?'

---

[1] 'Uttarajjhayani' 6/10.

'We kill an elephant with a bow and arrow. It serves us as food for a long period.'

'What makes you think that it is a superior way of winning food than living on roots?'

'The reason for holding it superior is the less number of destruction of lives involved in our mode of living. Vedantic monks destroy numberless lives for a day's meal while one life sustains us for days and days. The violence committed by them is graver than that committed by us.'

This specious argument in favour of non-vegetarianism is at least 2500 years old. Not only the householders but also meat-eating monks subscribed to it. Mahavira condemned this argument.[1]

His manifesto against carnivorous living was not a movement but an everflowing fountain of compassion. The stream of love enveloped in its wake every living being. He had as much affinity for birds, vegetables and minute organisms as for man. There was no scope for allowing any killing at all. Non-violence was his dream of dreams. But man, being what he is, would not readily accept the doctrine. The question of human survival was also not to be lost sight of. Food is a prerequisite of human life. That cereals sustain life was a common knowledge. The Lord examined the issue from two stand-points, first indispensability and second human resolve. The Lord would not support that which is unattainable.

Vegetables food is the minimum requirement of human life. Meat-eaters also consume vegetables but vegetarians scruplously exclude meat. Meat is not indispensable like vegetables. The will to live at another life's expense is there behind this way of living. The Lord's first motto is—If violence under compulsion is unavoidable, at least violence voluntarily performed should be avoided. This dictum renders non-vegetarianism assailable.

The growing fervour for vegetarianism all over the world can be traced to Jainism. Prior to that meat-eating was common

---

1. 'Suyagado' 2/6/52, 55.

to all the castes-Brahmin, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Shudra. Vedic religion did not prohibit meat-eating. Buddhists took meat although they subscribed to *shraman* tradition. Jainism alone tabooed meat-eating. Shravaka i.e. Jain house-holders also abstained from meat-eating.

Mahavira prescribes infernal perdition for those who commit four kinds of lapses one of which is meat-eating. It already evinces how he abhorred meat-eating.

As time elapsed Mahavira's movement against meat-eating gained momentum. Numerous religions and castes joined the movement and abandoned meat as a food. Other than Jain scriptures were also there that proscribed meat-eating.

Food is no end in life but only a means. And still it is an issue of great import. No doctrine is needed to sustain the principle. Only the force of the situation warrants an attention to the issue. From the biological angle alone a thought has been given to the matter. Other aspects of the subject have been ignored. Food does not affect merely the body, it affects one's mind as well. If mind be impure, the physical frame can be of little avail; it can barely use the animal force causing more unhappiness than otherwise. What is desirable is the mental purity and tranquillity. It necessitates a discreet choice of right type of food. It is barbarous and diabolical to butcher poor, mute, hapless animals for one's selfish ends. Meat-eating has caused this avoidable cruelty.

Mahavira gave his profound thought to the right type of food, its periodicity and its optimum quantity. Prohibition of meals at night is another great contribution of his novel thought.

Liquor, meat, intoxicants and stale food are to be imperatively shunned in the spiritual course devised by him.

8. Sacrificial Rites : Endorsement or Modification :—

The historians say : 'Mahavira repudiated sacrificial rites.' The present author seeks the liberty to hold a different view.

Mahavira, in facts, lent his support to the institution of rites, of course, in a modified form. Vedic literature also mentions non-violent rites, if the institution be traced to pre-Mahaviran era. It can be asserted that Mahavira endorsed it. If his contribution to the practice be evaluated, it would be in the fitness of things to say that Mahavira replaced the violent rite with the non-violent one.

Mahavira was blessed with an exhaustive mission. He examined truth from innumerable stances. His non-exclusive vision offers no word of refutation for any other religious system. Why would he repudiate sacrificial rite then?

Only one act he denounced, and denounced it with fervour—the act of violence. All violence was anathema to him, whether it be the violence committed by *shramanas* or the one by Vedic votaries. The sects of *shramana* or Vedic were not the objects of discrimination in his liberal philosophy. The touchstone was observance of non-violence or otherwise. His heart was one of a martial race but it was drenched with non-violence.

The Lord's disciples disseminated his non-violent word amongst the masses. Said Harikesh at Yagnavat—'Brahmins! Your rites are not superior.'

Said they, 'How it be so, saint?'

'The rite which bears violence is low and base.'!

'Then tell us what a superior rite is.'

'The rite incorporating self-abnegation, restraint, non-violent conduct is the cherishable *Yagna.*'

'Do you also perform rites?'

'I do and do it each day.'

Rudradeo was surprized at this revelation.

Said he, with a keen inquisitiveness, 'Which be the five fires in which you sacrifice the offerings? Where be your altar? What ladles do you pour butter with? Which dung-cakes do you use as fuel? What other fuels do you use? What are your hymns with which you invoke lasting peace and what else is it that you offer to the divine fire?'

Monk Harikesh quenched their curiosity in conformity with Lord Mahavira's dicta thus :

'Rudradeo! Austerities serve as fire in my sacrifical rite. The seat of awareness is the altar. The virtuous tendencies of the mind, speech and body are the ladles to pour the butter with. My body is the dung-cake to light the fire. My action is the fuel. Restraint is the hymn to invoke peace. Thus do I perform my non-violent rite.'[1]

The dialogue indicates no repudiation of the sacrificial rites. It only indicates a transformation of the act. This transformation took the bottom off the practice of animal sacrifices. The disciples of Mahavira verily engaged themselves in the noble task of repudiating the sacrifical rites.

A goat was being led to the sacrificial altar. A monk saw the procession. He stood in the way and as the goat came near, he bent low as if to listen to the whisper of the goat. A few passersby assembled to see this funny sight. After a moment the saint again stood up erect. The people asked 'What made you bow down thus, sir?'

'I was communicating with the goat.'

'Let's know what communication you had with the goat.'

'I asked the goat, 'Have you to say something before dying?'

'Yes! I would like to convey my feelings to the people.' I assured him to do the bidding. Said he, "I am being led to the altar so that I may attain the heaven. Pray tell the sacrificer to spare me the ordeal. I am happy where I am with hay as my food. Why do they goat me to a plight I never crave for? It were better if he had chosen the so called desirable heavenly existence for his near and dear ones. Why don't they sacrifice their kins on the altar?" This was all that the goat said. I hereby convey to you the goat's communication, worthy friends!'

The saint forsook to speak but his words echoed down the ages with the message of Mahavira. The sacrificial altar saw its perpetuity, conforming to the principle of non-violence.

---

1. 'Uttarajjhayani', 12/43, 44.

9. War and Non-invasion :—

Space is a continum and still man has been availing of the opportunity to break this continuity by building houses since his advent. The purpose of disintegrating space is to win comfort. Man is not at ease in an unbroken space while a compartmentalised space suits him. The universalised fraternity of creatures does not please his ego so much as the diversified groups do. Man's ego has been disintegrating humanity into numberless segments to please itself.

A nation is an example of this division. A fragment of land ruled by a distinct government and constitution is a nation. It holds a separate identity as against other nations. Its boundary divides it from other similar nations and thus segregates the humanity itself. This division creates rival interests and the fruit of rivalries is war that pollutes human mind with a war-mania.

Lord Mahavira opposed war-mongering since human interests are mutual and not rival. They harmonise with one another. Ego and ambition have generated rivalries. The apparent competition is more imaginary than real. The contemporary politics put a premium on warfare. Martial deeds were eulogised. A Sanskrit couplet symbolizes the contemporary martial craze :

'The one victorious wins the riches.

If dead he lives amongst the heavenly damsels. The life is brief.

If lost in a battle-field there need be no regrets.'

War-mongering was extolled as a virtue with mundane and transcendental glories. Certain spiritual institutions also endorsed it. To raise a voice against this craze was to endanger one's own popularity. Mahavira exposed the mad war-race ruthlessly. It was a voice against the wars fought for selfish ends. It was a voice raised in support of vast human interests. It was a voice against cowardice that hankered after safety into the citadel of arms. It was a voice against the sky-rocketing triumphs that thrived at the expense of the alien's happiness. The remonstrance was not a concession to cowardice.

The Lord's voice was more a credo of non-invasion than a remonstrance against warfare. The Lord invoked the masses of the nation to take a vow of non-invasion. Non-invasion nips the idea of warfare in its bud. It should either be a saint or a coward to stay uprovoked in the face of an assault. The Lord knew it well that the entire society could not be initiated into sainthood, nor would it be palatable to his genius to see them accursed with cowardice, or moral lapse. How could violence be forbidden against a marauder's attack? Only a non-violent reply could be suggested in the circumstances. However, such a mentality could not find roots in that era.

The Lord realized the significance of the principle of tit for tat. Hence he did not recommend an abstention from a violent response to assault or dereliction of duty. He exhorted the people to have a non-violent emphasis even in a violent reaction to an assault. If violence was to be resorted to, perforce, the compassionate outlook was not to be given up.

Varun was a disciple of Lord Mahavira. He had taken a vow not to injure others.[1]

Emperor Kaunik invaded Vaishali. Varun was ordered to go to the battle-field. He complied with the command of the chief of the polity. A soldier of Champa challenged him thus—'You warrior of Vaishali! What do you wait for? Why not attack me?'

Said Varun 'I never attack any one unless one attacks me first. And I hit only once a day.'

The soldier of Champa was furious at these words. He shot his arrow with a tremendous force. Varun was injured. The latter was also a great archer. He stretched the string of his bow and shot his arrow. The soldier of Champa was done to death.

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 7/197.

King Chetak also hit only when attacked first and that also only once a day.[1] It was the grafting of non-violence to violence. It was violence under compulsion redeemed by an accent on non-violence.

Chetak had taken a vow of non-violence. He believed in abstaining from injuring others. All urge for expansionism that he had had already been sublimated into philanthrophy. However, he was alive to his social responsibilities. Once queen Padmavati said to Kaunik, 'It is Vehallakumar who derives the utmost pleasure from a regal existence. You are no more than a prince in name.'

On Kaunik's query as to how he merited such a vitriolic remark, she said, 'Vehallakumar owns the rare elephant Gandhahasti and the most precious necklace. The two rarest jewels lie with him. What use our being the ruling chiefs?'

The argument of the queen had a persuasive force. Kaunik was piqued. He demanded the jewels and the elephant of Vehallakumar.

Said Vehallakumar, 'Sire! Late king Shrenik gifted me the necklace and the elephant during his life time. These are a part of my personal property. I may barter these articles for half the kingdom if you so desire.'

The offer found no favour with Kaunik.

Apprehending extrotion of the two articles at the hands of Kaunik, Vehallakumar planned to slink away to the kingdom of Chetaka and finding an opportune moment. He slipped off Vaishali with his valuable possessions.

No sooner Kaunik learnt of it than he sent his emissary to king Chetak to extradite Vehallakumar alongwith his precious necklace and elephant. Chetak rejected the request. He conveyed, 'You and Vehallakumar, both are sons of king Shrenik and my daughter queen Chellana. Hence you both are my grand-children. I treat you both equally. Vehallakumar has sought refuge with me. I have granted him asylum as the sovereign of Vaishali. I don't contemplate extraditing him to you with his necklace and elephant. In case you agree to share your kingdom equally with him I may consent to send him with his valuables.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', II pt. p. 173.

Kaunik reiterated his request with another envoy. Chetak was still unrelenting. Kaunik sent an ultimatum with his messenger rejectable at the peril of war. Chetak preferred to settle the dispute on the battle-ground.

Chetak called eighteen republics to discuss the issue. They all endorsed the stance of Chetak. Vehallakumar had sought asylum and hence he could not be banished like a common criminal. War is palatable to none but if Kaunik chooses to fight out he should be given a fitting lesson, they said.

The troops of Kaunik reached the boundary of Vaishali. A fierce battle ensued. Chetak decimated ten brothers of Kaunik during a battle lasting ten days.[1]

The following observation need mentioning :

1. Non-violence is no chicken-hearted policy. It is masculinity *par excellence.*
2. The great non-violent observants inspired with non-invasion by Lord Mahavira were not shorn of logistic strength. They only canalised their energies to human welfare.
3. As and when the harbingers of human damnation thrust war upon them, such observants never lagged behind in paying the enemies in the same coin.

It seems unusual that Lord Mahavira took no interest in this war. Both the adversaries were followers of the Lord. They swore by him. But the issues had become so tangled that the steam was to be let off on the battle ground rather than implore the Lord's good offices. Thus the fierce event was inevitable.

---

[1] 'Niryavaliyao', 1.

A similar mishap was occurring around Kaushambi. Queen Mrigavati prayed for the Lord's intervention. The Lord visited the site and brought about peace.

Kind Chandpradyota of Ujjaini was a powerful Chief. Levity was his besetting sin. He was a born philanderer. A glimpse of Mrigavati's portrait gave his romantic heart a throb. He sent his messenger with such an ignoble request. Shatanik revolted at the idea and treated it with the contempt it deserved. Chandpradyota resented this defiance and invaded the kingdom of Vatsa in full fury. Shatanik was at his wit's end. The shock was too much for him. He had an attack of dysentery and died. The royal widow made preparations for Kaushambi's defence. The people of Vatsa were determined to protect their country and their queen. The mighty army of Chandpradyota laid siege over the town. The terror of the war enveloped one and all.

Mrigavati remembered Lord Mahavira. It was her last ray of hope. He could be her saviour. Lord Mahavira came to the garden of Kaushambi. Mrigavati came to know of the momentous visit. She threw open the gates of the town-wall of Kaushambi. The oppressive air of scare was relieved with cheer. The battle-field became the land of peace. Everybody was in good cheers.

Mrigavati came where the Lord was. Chandpradyota also arrived. The Lord neither patronised nor chastised either of them. He was too familiar with human frailties to mind either party's faults. He impassively discussed the values of non-violence. The preaching induced in their minds lofty and purest feelings. Chandpradyota was fully purged of his acrimony.

Mrigavati raised the issue,

'Sire! Your speech is pregnant with wisdom. If King Chandpradyota consents to it and admits Prince of Vatsa into his protective fold, I may embrace nunhood.'

Chandpradyota bowed down his head in shame. His carnal desires had vanished long before, thanks to the refulgent glory of non-violence that enveloped him. He agreed to patronise Udayana. Who was hitherto a foe was now the protector. Mrigavati was sanctioned her long-cherished desire to be a nun. The people of Kaushambi were wild with joy. The war was an event of the past. Mrigavati was secure from any nefarious human adventure. Ujjaini and Vatsa were friendly nations once again.[1]

The Lord sponsored love and fellow-feeling. Every bosom responded to his message of good-will. His maxim is :

I forgive others' faults,
Others forgive my lapses :
I count each as my friend,
And feel enmity with none.

The axiom inspired millions with good-will and wiped off their ill-will.

There is no society without a bewildering variety of tastes, ideologies and habits. Dissimilarity breeds resentment and the resultant hatred, the vicious feelings that ultimately explode into wars.

The Lord prescribed three periodic occasions to win over such vicious feelings :—

1. Fortnightly introspection.
2. Four-monthly introspection.
3. Annual introspection.

The moment ill-will for anybody creeps in, it should be ejected perforce, lest it should become a mental gland. Instructed the Lord to the monks.

'If there be mutual acrimony purge it before you take your next meal.'

Once a monk came to the Lord and admitted, 'Sire! I had a tiff with a monk today. I apologise for it. Pray instruct me in these matters.'

'Beg each other's excuse please.'

'Sire! I fear the other monk will not pardon me.'

'He may pardon you or not, respect you or not, stand up courteously for you or not, offer courtesies or not, dine together or not, live amiably or not, mitigate animosity or not, you have to be kind and forgiving to him.'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. p. 91.

'Why should it be unilaterally incumbent upon me, sire?'

'To be a *shramana* implies peace. It implies fellow-feeling. Since you endeavour to be a true *shramana,* I exhort you to promote fellow-feeling. One who does so is a *shramana.* In the absence of this promotion of fellow-feeling one is not a true *shramana.'*

We cannot expect everybody to attain *shramanahood.* Even *shramanas* vary in temperament. Keeping this factor in view the Lord prescribed, 'If fellow-feeling is not aroused instantaneously, one should try to undergo the sublime experience every fortnight. If it be too much let one experience it once every four months. If this be found too prequant to be practical, try it annually. If even once a year the knot of ill-will is not dissolved, evoking love for the entire creation, take it for granted that your vision is far from a harmonious and a truly spiritual one.'

Harmonious vision is a prerequisite of a spiritual outlook. And tranquil and kindly attitude is the hall-mark of a harmonious vision. An individual shorn of an all-pervading kindliness is not truly spiritual in Mahavira's view. Chandpradyota won release from his prison-house by converting this aphorism of Mahavira into practice.

Chandpradyota kidnapped the beautiful maid of king Udrayana of Sindhu Sauvira and took her to Ujjaini. Consequently, Udrayana invaded Ujjaini. Chandpradyota was defeated. Udrayana imprisoned him and took him to Sindhu Sauvira. It rained heavily in the way. Udrayana camped at Daspur *en route.* It was the annual ceremony of good-will. Udrayana retrospected his preceding year's conduct and addressed Chandpradyota thus : 'Let's celebrate the festival in mutual forgiveness.'

Said Chandpradyota, 'How can forgiveness and confinement go hand in hand? And how do you expect a prisoner to extend a feeling of forgiveness for his detainer? It is Lord

Mahavira who has commented on the absolute freedom that good-will is synonimous with. There neither detainer can exist nor the detenue. What kind of forgiveness do you grant me or expect of me in this context, sire?'

Udrayana realised his fallacious thinking. He released him and thus bound him in a fresh link of friendship.[1]

The Lord laid down three conditions of disarmament:

1. Non-trading in arms.
2. Non-distribution of arms.
3. Non-proliferation of arms.

Warfare hails from ambition or anger. It estranges man from man. As the feeling of ill-will envelopes the heart, the inner fountains of good-will are dried up. The heart is shrivelled up in such polluted environs. The mind becomes a parched up thing. Man finds himself as cruel and barbarous. It is a malady with an ancient lineage.

The sole remedy available for it is a cultivation of equanimity and good-will for all. Lord Mahavira was a pioneer of this psychological remedy. His doctrine of non-invasion is as relevant in today's context, representing the tender and sweet emotions of man.

10. The Clarion-call of Non-acquisition.

Where there is body there is hunger. Every organism has to procure food to satisfy its hunger. Lower organism crawl about and consume food particle as and when they come across it. They are incapable of storing it. Certain other species can store some quantity of food. Man is a highly-evolved organism. He is endowed with the memory of the past experiences and can anticipate the coming events. It leads him to acquire and store for himself.

So long as man stayed in his primaeval jungle existence he stored food for his own consumption only. Socialisation induced him to procure food for personal consumption as well as for attaining status.

---

[1] 'Uttaradhyayan, Sukhbodha', leaf 254.

Physical needs are to be fulfilled by some means or the other. It is perfectly permissible to do so. Status-symbols and acquisition pertaining thereto have been the canker in the rose in some form or the other all along the recorded history.

During Mahavira's era penury was not known. But the concept of economic equality was unheard of. Poverty was not widespread and fatalism was the dominating philosophy. Hence hoarders and moneyed people aroused no hostility.

The state also accepted with kindly tolerance hoarding and acquisition. Individual enterprise was unrestrained in this venture. The incident of Mammana will illustrate the points.

The month of Asadh that hails the season of rain witnessed the hovering mass of clouds. The night was very dark. The wind was stormy. The river was gushing up with its upsurging and roaring watery stock. Each individual scrambled for a homely shelter in such a relentless night.

King Shrenik sat in the balcony of the palace with his queen Chellana. The flash of lightning revealed the contours of a scarecrow—like individual retrieving the drift-wood from the waves. It was a miserable wretch. The compassionate queen addressed herself to Shrenik, 'Your empire is marked by too many destitutes. Why don't your ministers do something to provide them with relief? You care for the rich, like a river paying tributes to the already swelling ocean. None has any sympathy for the penniless.'

'There is not a single man in my empire who is destitute. Every individual is provided with food, cloth and house to live in. It is a baseless allegation that we neglect our people.'

'I don't indulge character-assassination. I rely on my own eyes to detect such penurious beings.'

'Pray, substantiate your allegations.'

'That which is self-evident needs no proof. If somebody be engaged in hard-labour during such an inclement weather would you not concede that such a one must be a poverty-stricken wretch?'

'I must concede what you assert in case such a toiler in the forest is found. But I know it is simply inconceivable to find one in such a plight at this hour.'

'My Lord! Keep watching in this direction and the first flash of lightning will disclose to you what transpires at the bank of the river.'

As was certain within seconds the king saw, stunned, the happening at the bank. He hung his head in shame. He was remorseful of the grave failings of his administration. The acerbated feelings of the queen were too plain. The king sent for the man. He arrived and saluted the king.

'Pray, reveal your identity.'

'I am Mammana, sir.'

'And your native place?'

'Its Rajgriha itself, sire.'

'Gentle citizen! What leads you to stand at the river-bank in a loin-cloth during such a stormy night? Are you doing it for the sake of earning your bread?'

'No my Lord! I don't have to struggle for my livelihood.'

'Why this labour then at this improper hour?'

'I am short of a bullock. Hence I gather driftwood.'

'Why this hard labour for a mere bullock? You may obtain any bullock of your choice from my kine-house, if you will.'

'My Lord the match of my bullock shall not be found in the royal kine-house. What use my going there?'

'If your bullock some demi-god?'

'I invite your majesty to visit my place and then direct me.'

With the first ray of the sun the king was ready for the visit. Mammana was present to escort the royal visitor to his house. The visit was queer in more than one ways. The royal personage visited the place where the bullock was kept. The king saw a golden full-sized bullock with inlaid, jewels. The match was still to be found.

'I propose to build its like sire, 'said Mammana, his finger aiming at the half-built bullock.

The king kept silent for a moment and said, 'Yes, a match for your rare bullock is nowhere to be found in my kine-house. Even the royal coffers would prove inadequate to provide for such an extravagant venture. I wish you godspeed in this lavish venture. Strange is your determination.'[1]

The king narrated the tale of that wealthy pauper to his queen at the palace. The two were non-plussed at this contrast of Mammana the rigorous toiler at the river-bank and Mammana the connoisseur pursuing the fine artistry of gold and inlay work on the golden bullock.

The incident is the index of Mahavira's vow of non-acquisition. Be it noted that Mahavira never employed non-acquisition as a means to distribute property equally. The problem of haves and have-nots did not exist then. The problem was how to cultivate tranquillity, austerity and self-realisation. Acquisition of wealth was a great obstacle in these pursuits. That led the Lord to enunciate non-acquisition as a major observance. He was firmly of the opinion that without grasping non-acquisition, spiritualism cannot be comprehended. One incapable of non-acquisitive conduct is incapable of spiritual conduct.

Acquisition in common parlance means collection of wealth and property. The Lord's idiom is totally different. Body itself is acquisition and so are human latencies. Wealth and property are as much acquisition. Whatever is non-aware is acquisition, if we are not on our guard with respect to it. If we are aware of what is what, nothing will constitute acquisition. Fading of the great sense of discrimination is itself acquisition. A thing in itself does not constitute acquisition. It constitutes acquisition once it is linked with non-discrimination. Truly speaking non-discrimination is acquisition and the material object constitutes the tangible cause of it. To a man not contaminated with non-discrimination, an object is merely an object meant for some use and not a cause of acquisition. A man suffering from non-discrimination makes an object as an excuse for acquisition. Thus acquisition can be seen as (1) Its psychological counterpart (non-discrimination) and (2) the overt cause—(the object.)

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. pp. 371, 372.

Once, Gautam. the senior disciple of the Lord said to him, 'Sire! This pauper is truly non-acquisitive. He owns nothing.'

'Is his mind also shorn of all desires?'

'No, sir. It is not.'

'How do you call him non-acquisitive, then?'

1. A man contaminated with indiscrimination, even if penniless, is acquisitive in this penury.
2. An individual owning just adequate means of livelihood and wide-awake in his discrimination is austere.
3. A man neither suffering from the want of discrimination nor owning anything is non-acquisitive.
4. A man suffering from indiscrimination and owning huge property is acquisitive.

The Lord exhorted the social being to put a curb on his acquisitive tendencies so that he may progress towards non-acquisition. The maxim implied a curb on desire while literally it was a curb on the articles possessed. A curb on desire is a restraint on one's possessive instinct. It eludes a verbal expression. A curb on articles is a restraint on one's personal possession. It is amenable to a linguistic approach. Hence the Lord enunciated the curb on desire alongwith the curb on objective possession.

The curb on possession is the manifestation of the curb on desire. The man with unlimited desire makes an unlimited collection.

Viewing the tendency from the angle of material possession it can either be (1) Immense personal possession of material things or (2) limited acquisition for limited personal use. Lord Mahavira conceived a social system based on an optimum possession. Millions of people opted for such a society. They resolved to possess only the bare necessities of life. The Lord never spelt out in absolute mathematical terms the limits of such a possession. He gave the twin directions of limited possession—(1) an insistence on the purity of means adopted for acquisition and (2) an emphasis on austerity in personal life. Such pursuants of conscientious acquisition were forbidden to indulge the following practices:

1. Adulteration.
2. Under-weighing.
3. Supplying poorer stuff than the sample.
4. Over-loading the beasts of burden.
5. Harming another in respect of his means of livelihood.

The Lord felt that traders travel to remote places and thus deprive the native inhabitants of their rights. Such a practice leads to injury to others alongwith acquisition. The Lord propounded travel-curbs to fight these tendencies. Such believers of his who curbed their acquisition abstained from remote journey for trade. They shunned acquisition and the resultant reward earned in distant places.

The Lord induced a living faith in non-acquisition amongst the masses. Puniya is a great example of this noble ideology. King Shrenik offered to him half of his kingdom in *lieu* of an initiation into the observance of self-restraint *(samayik).*

'Puniya' declined the royal offer. To barter in the domain of spiritual pursuits was not acceptable to him.

'Puniya' was not wealthy. He earned his livelihood by making cotton rolls for spinning on a wheel. But he was a master of his own self evincing a remarkable degree of restraint. He had little faith in the amassing of wealth in a few hands. He proved to be a prominent follower of the principle of limited acquisition that Lord Mahavira propounded.

The movement for non-acquisition as conceived by Lord Mahavira was a part of his movement for non-violence. He had fully realised that non-acquisition remains unfulfilled so long as non-violence is unfulfilled. An individual infatuated by acquisition creates ill-will. Non-violence implies absence of all ill-will. One who abandons oneself to augmenting ill-will cannot contribute to the promotion of good-will. One who has not realised the essential unity of human fraternity and does not interpret a deprivation of another's privileges as his own cannot practise non-acquisition. The compulsion of social control may force an individual to surrender his personal possessions. This unusual social change is a consequence of the social developments of the last few centuries. However, the concept of limited personal ownership was the prime contribution of Mahavira towards non-acquisition.

28

A Horde of Paradoxes

Life is eventuated with numerous contrasts. None can pass one's entire career in an uniform and unchequered manner. The enthusiasts of uniformity treat these variegations as contradictions. Lord Mahavira's career was not free from these contradictions.

The Lord presided over the congregation. A devotee who had dedicated his life to the cause came and said, 'Sire! Earlier you stayed segregated. Now you sit in the congregation. Is it not a contradiction. ?'

'Seen from an absolute angle it is; seen from a relative angle it is not!

'How is it, sire?'

'During my earlier pursuit I was alone outwardly and still full of crowds inwardly. Now I sit surrounded with the followers and still I am fully emptied inwardly—emptied of latencies.'

Acharya Gaushalak, another life-devotee, also portrayed the Lord's life as a series of contradictions. Monk Ardrakumar left Vasantpur to visit the Lord. The latter stayed at Gunshilak monastery at Rajgriha. Ardrakumar and Gaushalak met each other in the way. Gaushalak learnt of his identity and said,

'It is strange that you intend to visit Mahavira. You are an astute prince and you have been so duped. What a surprize, sir!'

'I have not been duped. I have fully understood what Mahavira stands for.'

'I know him since much earlier.'

'Let me know your opinion of Mahavira.'

'Is it not clear to you from my abandonment of his company?'

'Abandonment of company may be caused by more than one reasons. Let me know what caused you to abandon him!'

'Mahavira is not constant in his ideology. He keeps shifting his stand-point. At one time he propounds a particular ideology and a little later another.

'Earlier he shunned all company : now he is surrounded by his disciples.

'Earlier he kept quiet : now he is over engaged in preaching.

'Earlier he would initiate none : now he is over-crowded with neo-initiates.

'Earlier he performed austerities : now he dines regularly.

'Earlier he took plain, dry food : now he partakes of sumptuous meals.

'Mahavira, you so much talk of, is a bundle of contradictions. That's why I abandoned his company!'

Gaushalak further laboured upon his thesis.

'Can you suggest a single common point between the kinds of life that he led in the past and that he leads today, Ardrakumar? If his past conduct was proper then the one today is improper. If what he does today is proper, what he did then was improper. Either must be faulty. How can both be termed proper?'

'I find both proper.'

'How?'

'I state with all the force at my command that he was alone then, is alone now and will be alone in future as well. When the Lord made his odyssey within, he was alone without. Since that odyssey is over, he launches on his odyssey without. Hence he is alone within. You must know Acharya! that an individual empty within recedes from human company while a man full within approaches human creed to disburse his mental possessions. The two situations are different with different outcomes in each case. There is no anomaly between these, any way.

'When the Lord witnessed truth face to face his tongue was mute. Now he has realised the truth and it seeks its expression without.

'The Lord was moving from imperfection to perfection. How could any disciple be had then? Now he is grounded in perfection. Imperfect follows the perfect. It is but natural.

The Lord was engaged in an ablution of his latencies. The Ganges of austerities flowed then. Now his latencies are fully purged. The Ganges of austerities has fulfilled its purpose. Austerities never exist for their own sake. Tell me how a boat is needed once we cross over the river.

'I assert vigorously, Gaushalak, sir, that the Lord's conduct is meaningful. There is nothing anomalous in it.'

Gaushalak attempted to undermine the thesis of Ardrakumar, 'But will you not concede Ardrakumar, that Mahavira is timid to the extreme?'

'There is no reason why I should.'

'And pray, what is the reason for holding otherwise?'

'I would like to know what causes you pronounce him timid.'

'Mahavira avoids the guest-houses where renowned scholars camp. The cause is his scare of the disputations that might inevitably ensure in such a concourse. Is it not enough to justify my allegation of chicken-heartedness against him?

'The Lord has no idea to be inane and puerile. The spot that suits his purpose is chosen by him. The questions that are fit for reply are attended to. The cause is not fear but rationality behind the actions.'[1]

The Acharya was viewing the Lord from a rigid angle. Hence his vision yielded a portrait full of criss-cross contra-

---

1. 'Suyagado', 2/6.

dictions. Ardrakumar saw Mahavira in the way latter suggested. It was a relative approach. What he saw was a portrait of harmonious lines.

One who observes a thing oblivious of the *milieu* merely sees the irreconciliable contradictions. Truth rewards him who views things relatively.

29

Co-existence and Relativity

Lord Mahavira enunciated the great principle of non-violence. Non-violence was the alpha and the omega of his pursuit of truth. The spectrum of consciousness ranges along the entire span of non-violence. It thus becomes a powerful means of the expression of truth.

Non-violence protrays good-will in the context of animal kingdom and relativity in the context of epistemology. The Lord was an embodiment of intense love and good-will. Even a tiger felt meek and kindly and a goat fearless in his vicinity. Such unfriendly beasts would sit quietly near him.

Co-existence plays a harmony of friendliness and community. It embodies peace and tranquillity without a grain of discord.

Disharmony is a creation of mind. It is human mind that has shaped the chimera of differences. Truth is an unending chain of dualities. Truth-falsehood, lasting-transitory, similar-dissimilar, articulate-inarticulate and such other dualities are some of the innumerable covalents of this chain. The co-existence of these dualities is the truth.

The Lord propounded—Nothing is absolutely true, nor absolutely untrue. The thing is a co-valent linking of the true and the untrue. No truth is exclusively lasting nor exclusively transitory. It presents a phenomenon of co-existence of the twin modes. No entity is either lasting or transitory exclusively. It is a combination of the lasting and the transitory.

Gautam would question the Lord frequently. Sometime these queries would relate to the Lord's life. Once he asked—

'Sire! Your existence is a patent fact or not?'

'My existence is a fact and at the same time it is not.'

'Sire! It could either be an admission of existence or a denial of it. How can both the statements be valid simultaneously?'

'Unless both the truths be valid simultaneously I can neither exist nor not-exist.'

'How is it so my Lord?'

'If my existence owes itself to the conscious self of others and not solely to my own conscious self then I can't aver that my existence is a patent fact. Existence can be claimed by a group. And since my existence is not patent my non-existence is also not patent.'

'Then is it certain that you exist by virtue of your own conscious self only?'

'Yes it is certain and relatively speaking undeniable that I exist by virtue of my conscious self.'

'Sire! Is it also certain that you don't owe your existence to the conscious self of others?'

'Certainly. Relativity certifies that I don't owe my existence to other conscious selves. Since I don't exist by virtue of other conscious selves, I exist by virtue of my own conscious self. That's why I state that I exist and I don't exist. Existence and non-existence go hand in hand. Non-existence shorn of existence and existence shorn of non-existence are no where to be found.'

'Sire! Just as your existence is transformed into existence, does your non-existence also transforms itself into non-existence?'

'You state the truth. The stream of my existence flows towards existence and the stream of my non-existence flows towards non-existence.'

'Then are not existence and non-existence contradictory?'

'No. Both are co-valents. The two co-exist to grant a thing reality.'[1]

There are numberless modes of a thing and numberless angles of looking at it. The existence of numberless angles on a given plane is the final truth. The existence of numberless angles is not a contradiction. Our failure to grasp all of these is the cause of apparent contradictions. A sea in turmoil is different in looks from a sea in tranquillity. To be in turmoil and to be in tranquillity are two modes. The substratum of existence underlining both the modes exists before as well as after, in the quiet sea as well as in the disturbed one.

Milk is curdled. The mode of curd comes into existence. The mode of milk is gone. The substratum of existence of both the modes, milk and curd, exist before as well as after.

The Nyaya school of Indian logic holds that the space is lasting while the flame is transitory. The Buddhists believe that the space is transitory and the flame is also transitory.

The lastingness of the space and transitoriness of the flame are contradictory in view of the Nayaya school. That the flame is transitory as well as lasting is a contradiction according to the Buddhists.

Mahavira's vision of truth differed from both these schools.

Said he, 'The flame described as transitory is lasting as well and the space described as lasting is transitory as well. The lastingness and the transitoriness are not incompatible. They are like two major branches of a single stem. A flame is dimmed every moment. Hence the Nayaya and the Buddhist schools were not wrong to deem it as transitory. The space is never exhausted. Hence the Nayaya school was not wrong to deem it as lasting. Mahavira never stated that it is wrong to deem the flame as transitory. Its transitoriness is evident and hence the view cannot be declared as fallacious. He said, 'It is fallacious to call a flame as absolutely transitory i.e. not at all lasting. A flame is a mode. When the molecules adopt a fiery shape we call them a flame. That the flame is extingui-

---

1. 'Bhagwati', 1/133-138.

shed means that the mode of the fiery appearance of the molecules is no more there. The disappearance of the fiery mode does not indicate the destruction of the molecules. The molecules are everlasting. They exist whether they have a fiery mode or otherwise.'

Gautam asked, 'Sire, pray. enlighten me whether the individual self is lasting or transitory.'

'Gautam! The individual self is lasting as well as transitory.'

'How be it, sire?'

'The substratum of mode—the calm serene ocean that consciousness is—is perennial. In the ocean roll and disappear the crests and troughs of waves that are transitory. The waves do not exist independent of the ocean and similarly the latter does not exist independent of the waves. The waveless ocean or the oceanless wave does not exist. That leads me to state that the individual self is lasting as well as transitory. When the hidden substratum of consciousness is seen beyond the modes we find the individual self as perennial. When the restlessly bubbling modes superimposed over the consciousness are viewed we find the individual transitory.'

The essential realities are fixed in number, not liable to multiply or reduce. Their content is never destroyed and that which does not exist is not created. The realities ever exist not subject to new creation or destruction. These realities are two, the conscious and the unconscious. Each of the two exists in its own right. Each excludes the other. Here the logic of Aristotle coincided with that of Mahavira. According to Aristotle 'A' is 'A'. It cannot be 'K'. 'K' is 'K' and cannot be 'A'. Mahavira's logic is that the conscious is ever conscious. It can never be unconscious. Similarly the unconscious is ever unconscious and never conscious.

We can infer the basic realities by means of their modes. The world of modes is unlimited. It emerges and is annihilated. To change every moment is its very nature. At this point Aristotlean logic diverges from Mahavirean. In respect of modes Mahavira argues that 'A' is 'A' as well as 'K'. 'K' is 'K' as well as 'A'. 'A' can be 'K' and *vice versa.*

A black-bee is black. But it is something more than black. It is yellow and blue and red and white also.

Sugar is sweet. But it is not sweet only. It is bitter, sour, soury—bitter, and vitriolic also.

A rose is fragrant. But it is not merely scented. It is odoriferous as well.

Fire is hot. But it is not hot only. It is cold as well.

Snow is cold. But it is not cold only. It is hot as well.

Oil is cold. But it is not cold only. It is hot as well.

Ash is dry. But it is not dry only. It is greasy as well.

Butter is smooth. But it is not smooth only. It is rough as well.

Iron is hard. But it is not hard only. It is soft as well.

Cotton is light. But it is not light only. It is heavy as well.

Stone is heavy. But it is not heavy only. It is light as well.

The resultant modes lead us pronounce the black-bee as black, sugar as sweet, rose as fragrant, fire as hot, snow as cold, oil as greasy, ash as dry, butter as soft, iron as hard, cotton as light and stone as heavy. If the latent mode recede as a latent one and *vice versa,* the black bee may appear white, sugar bitter, rose obnoxious, fire cold, snow hot, oil dry, ash greasy, butter hard, iron soft, cotton heavy and stone light.

Blackness or whiteness, sweetness or bitterness, fragrance or odour, heat or cold, grease or dryness, softness or hardness, lightness or heaviness are modes. Hence they are transitory and subject to change. They are based upon the substratum of molecules. These molecules are perennial. The modes occur to these molecules. Their existence does not reduce in any manner the molecular nature of the molecules.

The apparently contradictory modes occur on the same substratum. Hence the material world admits of co-existence and not contradiction. The order of nature admits of no conflict. Perceiving contradictions is only a play of our mind.

The Lord solved the tangle by means of relativistic logic and pertinent statement.

An object has numberless opposite characteristics. It can be comprehended by a vision comprising of all comprehensive angle. It can be described by means of numberless logical statements. The numberless properties of the object can be comprehended but cannot be expressed. At any point of time only one property can be revealed with a word. Delineation of one property cannot equate with the comprehensive delineation and there is no single word to describe all the properties together. The Lord cut this logical knot by using the term 'Khyat' to indicate the relative approach.

"Life is"—this syllogism endorses the existence of life. Life is not existence only : it is something more than that. 'Life is not! It endorses the non-existence of life. Life is not non-existence only : it is something more than that. Hence 'life is' and life is not' express the truth. A true syllogism would be 'perhaps life is', 'perhaps life is not.'

Existence cannot be denied. From this angle existence is there. Without conceding non-existence, its existence cannot be proved. Hence it does not exist. The points of time when the existence is there and it is not are not two different points. There is a point of time when it is also not and is not when it is. The two syllogisms cannot be simultaneously true. Hence life is ineffable.

Vedanta finds *Brahma* ineffable. According to Lord Buddha certain realities are indescribable. According to Lord Mahavira, molecule and Atman, subtle and gross all things are inexpressible. He adds that these are inexpressible as a whole but if seen in part from a particular angle these are describable. We say 'Mango is sweet.' It describes the sweet attribute of mango. But sweetness alone is not mango. Mango possesses numberless attributes and modes like sweetness. Certain attributes are too plain. It is yellow, fragrant and smooth. 'Mango is sweet' merely describes its taste to the exclusion of its colour, smell and touch. We know and describe the whole from its partial aspect. In this approach a particular attribute emerges and the rest are thrown in the background. This order of emergence and disappearance disintegrates the thing into numberless parts. However, in the substratum lies the thing itself, whole and intact. The knowledge of the whole and its expression is certainly true. The knowledge and expression of the part is also true if qualified with the term 'perhaps' to convey the relative sense implied in it.

A woman was churning the milk. One hand would move forward and another backward. Again the hand ahead would withdraw and the one that had been withdrawn earlier moved forward. The cyclical motion of hands would yield the cream. The process of churning out the cream of knowledge is identical. The instant mode of the thing rises to the surface and the rest sink below. Next, the second mode emerges and the previous one disappears. Thus the ocean of the thing keeps vibrating in the undulating modes. The purpose of the *Anekantic* logic (relativism) is to express the whole by means of its parts.

By propounding the principle of relativism the Lord made a novel contribution to intellectual non-violence. Numberous philosophers indulged intellectual acrobatics during his age. The practice of propounding one's own doctrine and refuting that of another was there in full swing. In such an atmosphere Mahavira professed—'Your doctrine is not false : only you propound it without the support of a relativistic approach. You portrary the part as whole. From this angle your doctrine is false. Prop it with relativism and your enunciation will ennoble the falsity to the plane of truth, symbolizing the part as whole. A Jain thinker has in this context described Mahavira's logic as a collocation of false views. All the partial views are false on account of their absolute assertion. As soon as they are aggregated with the tincture of relativism the philosophy of Mahavira emerges.

This is what Siddhasena Diwakar means in his verse—

'Lord! As the rivers merge into the ocean, all visions merge in your non-absolutistic vision. You do not seek those visions, as an ocean seeks no river.'

Disputes regarding truth are disputes of partial vision. Five blind men went on a journey. They reached a village. They heard about an elephant there. They went to learn of it. Of course, they had no eyes to see. They touched the elephant. Thus they obtained their knowledge about the animal and visualised it mentally. Now proceeded their discussion about the beast. Said the first, An Elephant is like a column.' Said the second, 'It is not like a column but like a stem of plaintain.' Said the third, 'No, an Elephant is like a club.' Said the fourth, 'You are also wrong. It is like a winnowing pan.' Said the fifth, 'You all tell lies. An elephant is like a thick rope.' All the five had visualised the animal according to their partial vision. None would budge from one's stance. Each insisted on his own thesis as final and another's as false. The tug of war was interminable.

There arrived an outsider. Fortunately he was not deprived of sight. He heard their arguments and said. 'Friends! You must have some reasons ro quarrel amongst yourselves.'

They narrated their experiences each. Each of them expected his view to be supported. Said the new-comer, 'You are all wrong.' The five shouted simultaneously. 'How can it be so? I have touched the elephant.'

Said the new-comer, 'You did not touch the whole of the elephant but a part of it each. Come along with me so that your dispute might conclude.'

He took them near the elephant. He helped each to touch the parts of the elephant. 'You are correct that the elephant is like a column but you have barely touched its leg and not the whole of it.'

'You are also correct that an elephant is like a club. But you have barely touched its tusk and not the whole of it.'

'You are also correct that an elephant is like a winnowing pan. But you have touched its ear only and not the whole of it.'

'You are also correct that the elephant is like a thick rope. But you have merely touched its tail and not the whole of it.'

'You are wrong because you assert your partial experience as true and another's as false. That makes all the five of you to be wrong. Let the part be merged with the whole and you will express the truth.'

Every basic reality of the universe is integral. An atom is also integral. So is the *Atma* or self. However, no integral reality is devoid of its parts. Mahavira reconciled the part with the whole by means of his relativistic approach. He revealed the mystery in the following words :—

'One who comes to know one, comes to know all. One who has known all, knows one.'[1]

A prejudiced individual invents arguments to justify his thesis. An individual free from prejudices applies his thinking equipment to the argument rightly.

A prejudiced being puts the spectacles of stubbornness upon his eyes to see truth and one free from prejudices sees truth with numberless eyes.

Lord Mahavira's age was one of intellectual fermentation. Numberless curious individuals sought instructions from the sages and masters. Besides their own masters they sometimes called on masters of other sects. Sometimes women were also there amongst the truth-seekers. Lord Mahavira quenched the thirst of thousands during his life-time. The greatest of such truth-seekers was his prime disciple-Indrabhuti Gautam. Much of his preachings is devoted to his questionings.

1. Once Gautam enquired.

'Sire! Certain aspirants state that spiritual pursuit is possible in a forest only. Pray let me know your considered opinion about it.'

'I hold, one may pursue spiritualism in the village as well as in the jungle. One may fail in it in the village as well as in the jungle.'

---

[1] 'Ayaro', 3/74.

'How is it so, sire?'

'One who can discriminate between the self and the body can succeed in his pursuit in the village as well as in the jungle. One who cannot discern the one from the other cannot succeed in the village as well as in the jungle.'

An aspirant ignorant of the self finds the question of whether to practise in the village or in the jungle germane to the issue. One devoted to one's self ever resides in the domain of the self. To him the issue of staying in the village or in the jungle is immaterial. It is a valid plea—'If you are devoted to the self what would you gain by shifting to the jungle? If you ignore the self what would you gain by shifting to the jungle?' It is valid under all circumstances.[1]

2. Saumil was Brahmin by caste. He subscribed to the Vedic faith and was a versatile scholar. He lived at Vanijyagram. The Lord visited the village. He stayed at the Dwipalash temple. Saumil visited the Lord. He greeted him and asked, 'Sire! You are one or two?'

'I am one as well as two.'

'How is it possible, sir?'

'From the view-point of conscious element I am one. From the view point of knowledge and wisdom I am two.'

'Sir! You are perennial or changing?'

'From the angle of transcendental consciousness I am perennial. From the temporal angle I am changing. What I was I am not and what I am I shall not be.'[2]

3. The Lord stayed at the Chandravataran Chaitya at Kaushambi.[3] Jayanti, the sister of king Shatanik arrived there. She greeted the Lord and asked.

'Sire! Is sleep preferable to waking or otherwise?'

'Some individuals were better asleep, others were better awake.'

---

[1] 'Ayaro', 8/14.

[2] 'Bhagwai', 18/219, 220.

[3] Third year of tirthankarhood.

'How he it, sire?'

'A spiritually obtuse man may better keep sleeping lest he should induce sleep in others.'

'A spiritual being were better awake for his waking shall wake up other somnolescents.'

'Sire! Were it better for the individuals to be weak or to be strong?'

'Some individuals were better weak. Others were better strong.'

'How be it, sire?'

'A spiritually lethargic individual were better weak lest he should cause inconvenience to others by evil means of livelihood.

'A spiritual being were better strong, since his vocation never pains another.'

'Sire! Were it better for the individuals to be lethargic or to be up and going?'

'Certain individuals were better lethagic and certain others up and going.'

'How the two statements are to be reconciled, sire?'

'An indulgent were better lethrgic, lest he should create trouble for others.

'A restrained being were better up and going since he may serve others thereby.[1]

4. A roving monk Skandaka lived at Shravasti.[2] The Lord visited Kayanjala. He came to the Lord. Said the Lord, 'Skandaka! You harbour a doubt in your mind whether the worlds are limited in number or unlimited.'

'Yes, sire. I wish an interpretation of this riddle.'

'I interpret it from a relativistic angle. The world is limited in number as well as unlimited.'

'How can it be so, sire?'

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 12/53-58.

[2] Eleventh year of tirthankarhood.

'The universe is one. Hence numerically it is one. It occupies the vast space. Hence it is limited in extant. The universe was, is and shall be. Hence it is limitless. It has numberless attributes of colour, smell, taste and touch. Hence it is limitless in modes.'[1]

It is limitless to a single sight that detects clash in harmony. It is one to the numberless sights that detect harmony in clash. The Lord harnessed numberless sights to detect truth and thus portray it.

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 2/45.

30

Everwakefulness

An infatuated eye reads only virtues in things. An eye shot with revulsion observes only defects. An impartial eye observes the virtues and the defects, both. The Lord's pursuits raised him far above the jumble of infatuation and revulsion. This wakefulness had touched the zenith where the concepts of cherishable vs undesirable do not exists. Wakefulness is the only cherishable state and indolence the only undesirable one. Wakefulness was the Lord's austerity. Wakefulness was his pursuit. Wakefulness was his meditation.

The Lord was not God. He was like any other ordinary human being of his age. He was not the destiny maker of anybody. He could not create or destroy the universe. He was not the ommipotent God who can do, undo and reverse things. He would not greet a divine power who masters human destiny. His God was not different from man. His God was not different from the self. Every self was supreme self to him. Every self was God to him. Oblivion of the self is indolence and sleep. Awareness of the self is wakefulness and alertness. An unbreaking awareness of the self makes it the supreme-self. It is to be God.

Lord Mahavira led the self Godwards and unravelled the divine mystery. It is his prime contribution. The Lord was ever alert and continued to wake others and make off their indolence. He exposed each one to this benign influence of his.

Gautam was his first disciple, the great interpreter of the Lord's relativism and its commentator. Once he learnt that the aspirant Ananda was seeking to die in meditation. He entered the meditation room. Ananda greeted him. They began to discuss spiritualism and Ananda said, 'Sire! Thanks to my pursuit of the doctrine of everwakefulness propounded by Lord Mahavira, I am blessed with transcendental knowledge.'

Said Gautam, 'Ananda! a householder may earn such transcendental knowledge but it is limited in extent. You claim to have attained the highest degrees of it. It is proper that you perform penances for such an untruth.'

'Sire! Is it prescribed by the Lord to perform penances for speaking truth?'

'Never.'

'Sire! If the Lord prescribes expiation for speaker of untruth, then it is you who ought to expiate.'

Such an assertion induced a great doubt in Gautam's mind. He approached Lord Mahavira. He related the occurrence to the latter.

'Pray Lord, tell me whether Ananda should expiate or myself.'

'What Ananda has stated he has done with full awareness. It is a true assertion. He has nothing to expiate for. The mental indolence overtook you and not him. Your assertion was wrong. You ought to perform penances. Go back to Ananda endorse his truthfulness and express regrets to him.'

Gautam instantaneously made for the meditation room of Ananda. It was a bold ethical experiment that the chief disciple of the Lord approached Ananda, supported his experience, regretted and sought the latter's forgiveness.[1]

The Lord knew that siding with untruth would bring no credit to Gautam. If Ananda was to be let down to redeem Gautam's prestige it would have inflated his conceit to the detriment of his self. Any eclipsing of the self was least tolerable to the Lord. He had no other course open to him except to redeem Gautam's self rather than his ego.

---

[1] 'Uvasgadsao', 1/72-82.

The philosophy of Mahavira begins with awakening and culminates into awakening. That which links the two phases is again awakening. An iota of indolence would devastate this everconsciousness. The two are absolutely incompatible.

Mahashataka was engaged in meditation at his place of worship. His wife Rewati was utterly cruel. She tried to distract him but failed. Rewati repeated her mischief a few days later. It so happened that Mahashataka got annoved at it. He reprimanded and cursed her, 'Rewati You will die of cholera this very week. Inferno awaits you after your death.'

Rewati was scared of the impending ailment, death and hell. The threefold curse worked along her bonemarrow, as if. The end of the week saw her end.

Lord Mahavira came to Rajgriha.[1] Said he to Gautam,' Devotee Mahashataka has cursed his wife. You may go and adomonish him for having indulged such acrimony, being an aspirant. He may expiate.'

Gautam did accordingly and conveyed the chastisement to Mahashataka who duly realised his guilt. The flame of wakefulness was rekindled.[2]

The moments of spiritual oblivion are the moments of great mishaps. These are the occasions of ill-occurence.

Once the inner apartments (seraglio) of king Shrenik suffered great suspense. The king was tormented with a suspicion on queen Chellana's virtue. In fury he commanded Abhayakumar to set the female apartments on fire. Issuring this commandment he retired to where Lord Mahavira was.

The Lord could know his lapse. He propounded in his congregation :

'Suspicion is a maelstrom. No vessel can escape out of it. Such is the case with Shrenik's vessel today. He suspects the character of Chellana. Vividly do I see how chaste and noble is her character. And still suspicion seeks to eclipse her moon-like virtue.'

---

[1] Tenth year of tirthankarhood.

[2] 'Uvasgadsao', 8/41-50.

The blunder of the king was brought home to him. He rushed back to the female apartment. The fire that was to reduce everything to ashes was put out by the waters of wakefulness. The king congratulated himself for his redeemed wisdom.

The moments of spiritual awareness are the moments that grant purpose and sustenance to human life. Whatever endows, uplifts and ennobles human existence is a reward of such worthy moments.

During his meditation the Lord realised that the self is like a wakeful, refulgent sun. Life and death have no access to it. There exists neither a craving for life nor shrinking from death. A coincidence of body and vitalbreath lends this self a living physical frame. The moment the two are snapped, the self quits the body, resulting in death.

The self is ever-present whether in life or death. Why then the craving for life and shrinking from death? The Lord probed this enigma and revealed that the self is shorn of cravings. Craving is its oblivion. The self is shorn of fear. Its oblivion itself is fear. The word of the Lord is echoed even today, 'One who has thrown vigilance to winds is exposed to fear from all sides. The one grounded in eternal wakefulness has nothing to fear.'[1]

Once the Lord summoned Gautam and the monks to himself. They approached him.

He questioned them, 'May you live long, *shramanas!* Will you tell me what the individual self is scared of?'

Said Gautam, 'My Lord! We fail to grasp the purport of the question. Pray, enlighten us regarding your own query. We are all ears for your preaching.'

'Worthy saints! The individual self is scared of pain.'

---

[1] 'Ayaro', 3/75.

'Who is the author of pain?'

'Indolence.'

'Who terminates pain?'

'Individual self'.

'By what means is this pain eradicated?'

'By eternal vigilance.'[1]

The Lord thus revealed a great truth. He proclaimed that fear and pain are not everlasting. Lax vigilance or indolence is the moment of experiencing fear and this is the moment of experiencing pain.

Kamdeo was practising meditation and moral wakefulness. It was not yet mid-night. He was suddenly confronted with a demon's figure. Said the demon, 'Kamdeo! Abandon the affectation of meditation and moral vigilance. Else I will behead you with this sword.'

Kamdeo was living the moment of moral awareness. He neither experienced fear nor terror and pain.

The demon realised the fiasco that his nefarious efforts met. He felt resented. Then he assumed the shape of a mammoth elephant to terrify him. He threw the aspirant high up the sky like a ball. When he fell flat on the ground the elephant trampled him with his feet. And still his meditation was unbroken.

The demon was fully wild now. He adopted a fierce serpentine form. He stung Kamdeo repeatedly. But the latter was unperturbed. Ultimately he was forced to appear in his original demi-divine shape and quit. Moral indolence had to submit to the moral wakefulness.[2]

Lord Mahavira came to Champa.[3] Kamdeo called on the Lord. Said the Lord, 'Kamdeo! You spent the last night in eternal wakefulness.'

'I did, sire!'

'Attempts were made to distract you.'

---

[1] 'Thanam', 3/336.

[2] 'Uvasgadsao', 2/18-40.

[3] Eighteenth year of tirthankarhood.

'Yes, sire.'

'Good it is that you could prove your mettle.'

'By your grace, My Lord.'

'The Lord invited the monks and the nuns and said, 'Worthy monks! Kamdeo is a householder. And still he has shown a remarkable degree of moral awareness. He has stoically stood all the tests he was put to by the divine powers. He has attained the *Summun* bonum. You are monks. Your spiritual awareness, equanimity, stoicism and concentration should be of a still higher degree[1]".

Eternal watchfulness is an ever-burning lamp. It lights many more such lamps. Inwardly each of us is like a lamp. The lid of moral indolence obstructs it. If you know the device how to uncover the lid, you will be enlightened. It will be all light then. Light is not borrowed externally. It hails from within. We are not to seek it from elsewhere. We are ourselves perfect in all respects. Outwardly we are imperfect. The moment this lid of moral indolence is off, there will be nothing but light outwardly as well as inwardly.

Gautam had left Prishthachampa to visit the Lord. The ex-monarch monks Shal and Gagali of Prishthachampa accompanied him. Where the Lord held the congregation notable arrangements for seating were available. Listeners sat in their respective groups. Shal and Gagali moved towards the group of enlightened beings *(Kewalis)*. Gautam prevented them. Said the Lord, 'Gautam! Don't prevent them from going thither. They have attained enlightenment[2].'

Gautam was at his wit's end. 'My new initiates are enlightened while I am still not! What a jeopardy!' Gautam was heart-broken. The moral bewilderment he suffered grew intense.

Later, Gautam proceeded to Ashtapada. Kaudinna, Dinna and Shewal, the three anchorites alongwith their disciples were ascending the hill. They were impressed by Gautam and submitted to his discipline. Gautam brought them with himself to the Lord. They began to move to join the group of enlightened beings. Gautam dissuaded them. Said the Lord, 'Prevent them not, Gautam. They are already enlightened.'[1]

---

[1] 'Uvasgadsao', 2/45, 46.

[2] Uttaradhyayan Sukhbodha, leaf 154.

Gautam lost all patience. He failed to cope up with the mystery. The initiator was still unlightened and the initiated enlightened. A senior initiate was unenlightened and a neo-initiate enlightened! What a system! Gautam was violently perturbed. 'Whom to blame?' he thought. 'My Lord does not concede God as the destiny-maker. How do I ascribe any partiality to Him? My Lord also does not steer my conscience. Thus he also escapes the allegation of partiality, I am my own destiny-maker. How can one indict aught in one's own self? By conferring absolute freedom of will on man the Lord has created an insoluble enigma. In his attempt to disentangle it, he himself is too entangled to either blame any partiality in his dilemma or importune it for aught. My unbegging individuality poses a grave problem for me.'

'My Lord! we tread the common path. What makes the course of my disciples so short and mine so tediously long?'

The Lord saw how anguished his heart was. He addressed himself to Gautam, 'What are you engaged in?'

'I attempt some introspection.'

'You find faults with my philosophy or your own progress?'

'You forbid finding faults with others. Hence I scrutinize my own progress.'

'Do you know each individual stands this side of the beach confronted with the ocean of ignorance and attachment?'

'I do know, sire.'

'Do you remember your vow to cross over the ocean and go beyond?'

'I do, sire.'

'What ails you, then ?

---

[1] Ibid 155.

'I fail to cross over the ocean to reach the beach yonder'.

Pepping up Gautam's sagging spirits the Lord said, 'you have fairly progressed in your oceanic voyage, Gautam. Why do your spirits droop when you are on the verge of touching the banks beyond? Make haste Gautam to cross over. Be not indolent for an instant.'[1]

The Lord cheered him up, 'Gautam! What makes you so impatient? For ages you and I are bound together in affection. I have won your admiration. We have been familiar for so long. You have given me your love for so long. You have been my follower for so long. You have emulated me for so long.'

'In my last incarnation I had been a demi-god. In my human incarnation also you have kept company with me. Since ages back we have been together. On being freed of this mortal frame you and I will be identical with each other. We will mean the same thing, exist for the common purpose, function similarly. We will be identical in all respects with no difference whatsoever. All this is imminent. What makes you disheartened? Awake and droop not for a moment.'[2]

The reassuring pat lifted up the drooping spirits of Gautam. He was ridden of his anxiety and rose once more to the everlasting wakefulness. However, his deepest doubts still lurked. Why do the courses leading to spiritual regeneration differ so much in length? He presented his doubt to the Lord. The Lord solved it. The solution is the immortal message of spiritual escalation from a great soul. Thus does it run—

The gross world can be fettered with rules. The conscious world regulates things. It enjoys the freedom that goes with consciousness. It harps upon a thousand notes of spiritual regeneration. It courses along a million free avenues of individual progress. How can, then, one thrust rules and moulds over it? Where there is absolute freedom for inner growth, freedom of direction and pace, there is all likelihood of varia-

---

1. 'Uttarajjhayani', 10/34.
2. 'Bhagwai', 14/77.

tions of length of course. If it were not so what would freedom mean? If a regimentation of pace of progress were possible where would the dividing line lie between freedom and bondage?

Revealing the secret the Lord said, 'Gautam! the course of these neo-initiates is not shorter. They have progressed with a high pace. They have snapped the thread of attachment asunder promptly. That delivered them at their destination so early.

'You have still not cut that link. Your attachment is wrapped round my physical frame. You know how subtle and stubborn the links of affection are. The black-bee that can pierce wood is imprisoned in the lotus. Watch this ligament please and do so constantly. The blessed moment will dawn upon you when nothing but light will emanate from your being. You will be flooded with brightness. Blessed be that moment of achievement and blessed be the doubly blessed subject.'

The kind blessings of the Lord cheered up Gautam. His chaste face was aglow with happiness. His eyes were all brightness. He was calm and contented, as if risen from a dream.

What did the Lord mean when he exhorted Gautam to be alert ever and anon? Can an instant's lethargy be so dangerous that the Lord warned him thus? Can a moment's indolence devastate such momentous watchfulness? Thought Gautam—'I must seek a final solution of this riddle.'

Gautam submitted his confusion to the Lord.

Asked the Lord. 'Have you seen a lamp?'

'Yes, sire.'

'What happens when it burns?'

'The particles of dark turn into those of light. The room is filled with light.'

'How long does it stay lit?'

'So long as the lamp burns.'

'What happens if the lamp is put out for a moment?'

'Sire! The extinguishing of the lamp and the occurrence of darkness are a single event. There is no interval between the two.'

'Gautam! This is what I assert. The moment the lamp of awareness is extinguished, the seat of consciousness is dark-engulfed.'

'What happens during the moment of awareness, sire? Does it transform the human moral desert?'

'While the man is in awareness, his seat of consciousness is elated. The virtuous latencies come to the fore and the vicious ones consequently are sublimated. Thus vicious desert is converted into the virtuous one, changing the latencies that emerge as good or evil actions.'

'What happens during the moment of spiritual indolence?'

"During the moments of spiritual indolence the seat of consciousness of man is engulfed in darkness. Simultaneously, the evil latencies come to the fore to transform all the particles of virtuous latencies into vicious ones. This is the conversion of virtuous latencies into vicious ones. This is the conversion of moral desert.'

'It is a miraculous chain of occurrences, sire. How is it made possible?'

'It is very much possible. This is here that our capabilities come into play. This is the destiny of our dynamic capacity. It is inevitable. Hence I say keep the flame of awareness burning. Permit it not to extinguish for a moment.'

31

The Gift of Sight

The Lord was a fountain of light. Innumerable lamps borrowed light from him and as many dimmed ones were rekindled by his grace. The lamp is prone to be lit up and extinguish. The Lord would not relish it. He would wish the lamp of awareness to be everburning without ever being put out. Let it burn constantly and attain the stage whereafter there is no extinguishing.

Meghkumar was king Shrenik's son. He approached the Lord. His dormant consciousness was rekindled. It rose to a high pitch to flow upwards. A lamp that had been convered under a lid began to emit a million beams of light. Now it emitted a perennial brightness. In theological parlance he became a monk.

The day was spent waking, the night in sleeping. The sleep not only closed the eyes but covered the lamp of consciousness. The common sleep that closes the eye-lids ends with the morn. But the sleep that muffles up the consciousness survives a thousand dawns. While he was asleep his stream of consciousness lost its upward motion and reverted to the usual downward trend. He came to the Lord. The Lord saw his lamp of consciousness being dimmed. Said he, 'Megh! You come with the mission to rekindle your consciousness. Is it not so?'

'It is so my, Lord.'

'Your prenatal memory is lost. In your last incarnation while you were an elephant, you attained spiritual heights. Now in human incarnation you, as a prince, opt for the dark forces. It does not behove you.

The chastisement stirred the mind of Meghkumar. He introspected himself. It was a curious jolt. The shock was but necessary to metamorphose him. The seers who have unravelled the secrets of consciousness resort to such means to give an impetus to the aspirant. Meghkumar's mind was switched off the present. No more was he conscious of what he had to submit to the Lord. He was all keenness to know of his past. The inner odyssey was begun. The human mode was overridden by the elephantive mode.

'Then, was I an elephant in my last birth, sir?'

'A flash-back will reveal to you that in the last incarnation but one you were an elephant, large and beautiful. The jungle valley of Vaitadhya hill was your abode. It was summer then. The friction of tree-trunks caused forest-fire. Wind-blasts kindled it. The trees fell one after the other. The whole of the forest was one continuous flame. All around there was smoke. Wild beasts ran criss-cross. You also rushed wildly with your herd. However, you lagged behind the rest as you were old. You lost your direction. There you saw a lake. You entered it to drink water. It had more mud than water. Before reaching the water you were caught up in the marshy bank. You extended your trunk to take a draught but it fell short. You struggled hard to get out but it further trapped you. A young elephant of your group came around. You had once hurt him with your tusks and expelled him from your herd. It was vengeful to see you and wantonly hit you there. You lasted for a miserable week. You died to be born again as an elephant along the southern bank of the Ganges in the valley of Vindhyachal. They named you Meruprabha.

Once again forest-fires erupted. You entered the deep forests with your group. The sight of fire gave you tremors. Your memory was revived into a flash-back. You remembered to have had a similar experience. You recapitulated your prenatal existence vividly. The Vaitadhya forest-fire was there before your mind's eye.

Benefitted by the experience of the past you marked a clearing on the earth and removed all vegetation from it. The fires flew high in the forest. All the beasts sought refuge in this clearing. You also stood there with your fellows. The patch was packed with animals. The pyrophobia rendered all of them as friends. It was a friendly camp with no remnant of enmity. Tigers, deers, foxes and hares all congregated. It was full to the brim. You raised your foot to scratch yourself. While putting it aground you saw a hare sitting there. You felt compassion for the poor little thing. You held your foot dangling in the air to keep the hare alive. The kind act earned you the claim to be born as a man.

Two days and nights passed. Third day the forest fire was put out. The beasts left that circle and retired to their respective regions. The hare also went away. Your foot was still held high. You attempted to settle it again but you had suffered without food and water all these three days and above all you were old. The foot had gone rigid. The moment you struggled to touch the ground you had cramps and you collapsed as does a silvery mountain aground. You still survived for three days and nights in excruciating pain. You crossed the portals of death to be born in the house of king Shrenik and queen Dharini.

'Megh! when you were born in a crude *(Tiryancha)* species devoid of enlightened vision you kept your foot above the ground out of pity for a hare. You stood that discomfort voluntarily. Non-violence took away all of your pain. Now you are a man. You are endowed with an enlightened vision. You own the inner fountain of light. How be it that you opt for ignorance and dark? Why should small discomforts exhaust your patience? Why did little obeisance peeve you? Why a bit of their indifference annoy you?'

The portals of Meghkumar's memory were knocked open by the Lord. He could see in his vision the elephant in the marshes and again his vast shape with his foot dangling in the air. He was stunned. The thinking equipment, the tongue and the frame, all grew numb. He stood aghast like a statue. It was all silent. Not a stir in the air, quiet and tranquil.

The Lord rent the calm, 'Tell me Megh, What You desire.'

'Sire! I seek your kind refuge and nothing else.'

'Is it in an inertia of casualness that you say so?'

'Where is the scope for any fading of my full-consciousness once I have witnessed the past of mine?'

'Then you are determined for the absolute?'

'Yes, sire. Where is the ground for resilience now? The way back is slammed by you.'

The Lord threw a kindly glance at Megh. The latter felt the uplifting caress of the glance. Consciousness regained its kingdom[1]. His heart was alit with brightness. He began to murmur :

'Few do know,
Whether I hail from the east or the west
From the south or the north,
From this direction or that,
From higher realms or the nether ones.
The Lord shuttled me to my past.
I did see my last halt.
Pray, open up the door ahead.
That I may see my future camp[2]'.

---

[1] 'Nayadhammakahao', 1/152-154.

[2] 'Ayaro', 1/1-3.

32

The Three Dimensions of Equanimity

If there one reality behind the creation? Unity is genuine or duality? The visible life is an image or a reflection? Man has threshed these questions for thousands of years. The two significant theories are the Vedantic Monism and Dualism. Vedanta holds that the reality behind life is one. He is conscious, omniscient and the Supreme Lord of creation. *Brahma* is its name. Reality is single, duality is its expansion. Life is a reflection. Brahma is the original vision. The single sun assumes a thousand shapes by being reflected in many ponds. Sunrays diverge to all spots in the morning and are withdrawn in the evening. The universe is the divergence of Brahma's rays. They retire into their original source again. Samkhya argues that there are two realities at the root of creation—*Prakriti* and *Purusha* (self). Prakriti or nature is unconscious and *Purusha* is conscious. *Purushas* are multiple. Hence unity is not integral. The conscious and the unconscious are not related as a vision and its reflection.

Mahavira's view is different from the two. His thesis is that no thought or idea in the world is totally different from another. In that sense his theory should also resemble the other two theories discussed above. Mahavira read unity in existence. There is no division of the conscious and the unconscious. Existence means *to be. To be* begs for no other appended attribute. Where *to be* alone is the reality there is perfect non-duality. Mahavira propounded non-duality on the basis of unity of existence. If existence were the only function, the universe would have been nothing but existence. However, there are numerous functions against a background of numerous attributes. An element reveals consciousness and similar functions. Another element does not reflect such attributes and functions. On the basis of multiplicity of attributes and functions Mahavira propounded duality. Mahavira, in fact, is neither a dualist nor a non-dualist. Simultaneously, he is a dualist as well as a non-dualist. In his philosophy the reality behind the universe is one as well as many. Looking at the pervasive attribute like existence, unity is integral. Looking at the extraordinary attribute like consciousness, multiplicity is integral. The inference is unity is as integral as multiplicity.

According to Mahavira there are infinite atoms and infinite souls. Every atom and every self is an image. Each image has its respective reflection also. The primary attribute is the image and its activity its reflection.

It was in this metaphysical field that the seeds of spiritual pursuit were sown by Mahavira. In the context of the unconscious, spiritual or moral pursuit has no relevance. Its existence and activation depend on natural laws. There is nothing conscious in it. The existence of the conscious is also related to the natural laws but the latter don't steer it. The conscious changes knowingly and progresses towards a conscious goal with purpose. This constitutes its pursuit. Human knowledge is fairly evolved hence it aspires to attain the acme of evolution. From the point of view of consciousness it can move on to two planes—that of modality or duality and that of non-duality. There are infinite modalities like life and death, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, happiness and unhappiness. Such situations throw the mind out of gear. It is an abnormal situation.

Mahavira devised the practice of equanimity as a remedy for this tension of split-personality. The term *samata* or *samayika* are used by him synonymous with *dharma.* It conveys.

(1) A search for equanimity and community between creature and creature and its realization.

(2) Bridging with mental equanimity the two banks of modality.

Equanimity flourishes on fellow-feeling, fearlessness and tolerance. A man who cannot brave adversities cannot be fearless and a fearful man cannot develop fellow-feeling. One incapable of standing adversities grows wild and induces fear amongst others. Equanimity grows and stabilises itself on the three planes explained above.

Equanimity does not grow on a single plane. We may observe an individual developing his faculty of fellow-feeling more keenly or another that of fearlessness and still another that of tolerance. A growth of one is inevitably followed by that of the other two. Equanimity is invariably accompanied by the three faculties. In fact, these three virtues together constitute equanimity.

1. THE FACULTY OF FELLOW-FEELING

Kalsankarik was the greatest butcher of Rajgriha.[1] Hundreds of buffaloes were killed in his abattoir every day. King Shrenik offered to reward him adequately in case he relinquished this butchering.

Kalsankarik declined the offer. Butchering the buffaloes was less a vocation to him and more a habit. Omitting to do them to death would ill-suit his ingrained habit. The king was offended at this disregard of his irresestible offer. He clapped Kalsankarik into a black-hole. After having kept him for a day and night Shrenik submitted to Lord Mahavira :

'Sire! I have made Kalsankarik give up butchering of buffaloes.'

'It is hardly possible, Shrenik.'

'Sire! He is imprisoned into a black-hole. How can he butcher buffaloes there?'

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', II pt. p. 168 etc.

'His heart is not converted. How would he give up his force of habit by coercion?'

'Does the Lord believe, then, that he has killed buffaloes in the dark prison-house also?'

'That is what I mean, precisely.'

'How is it possible?'

'Is there no clay in the cell?'

'There is, sire.'

'Cannot clay be moulded as a buffalo?'

'It can be sire.'

'That is what I mean when I say that Kalsankarik has been killing buffaloes throughout the day!'

The king realized the truth that coercion cannot purge one of violence. It is possible by change of heart only. The king discovered in the black-hole hordes of 'killed' clay buffaloes and Kalsankarik still busy with his imagined butchering. The king released him.

After a few years Kalsankarik died. Such is this life that none can live beyond a certain span of years. None is immortal. The killer also is killed one day. The people learnt that Kalsankarik was dead. His kins cremated him.

Sulas was his son. The family desired him to take to his ancestral trade but he frankly refused to do so.

The family was in a dilemma. They tried to prevail upon him once more but he plainly declined to ply the trade. 'I love other's life as much as my own. How can I deprive others of their lives for preserving my own?'

The kins assured to share the sin equally with him. They prompted him to proceed with one buffalo. Sulas lifted the sword of his father. The relatives were elated. Sulas eyed the buffalo with pity and hit his own thigh. He fainted and fell. Blood rushed from his wound. After a while he regained his consciousness. Piteously he appealed, 'Dear Kins! this injury is too much for me. Please share my affliction that I may be relieved of the excruciating pain.'

The kins said glumly, 'We know no device how to share another's pain. It is hardly possible! Said Sulas, 'If my pain can't be shared, how shall you share my sins? I renounce the sinful vocation nonetheless for being my ancestral profession. If one's father be blind should his son also embrace blindness?'

2. ON THE PLANE OF FEARLESSNESS

Arjuna, the flower-vendor, was carefully culling flowers in his grove. Bandhumati followed him like a shadow. They were very gay. The entire town of Rajgriha was engaged in high celebrations. Every inhabitant was desirous of buying flowers. Arjuna was speedily picking up flowers in the hope of cashing on this craze of the citizens. The couple plucked heaps of Karandaka flowers in a short while. Such was their zeal.

Arjuna used to pick flowers to worship Mudgarpani, the demigod, the well-known deity of the region. It's abode was near the grove. Arjuna was his devotee in accordance with his family tradition.

There was a secret group of ritualists in Rajgriha called Lalita. Six members of the coterie were engaged in their orgies in the Yaksha's (demigod's) temple. As usual Arjuna entered the precincts to make his floral offering unaware of the fatal noose set for him there.

The gang noted his wife Bandhumati behind him. Their libido was set on fire. They concealed themselves in a cell nearby. As the florist bent to offer the garlands, they leapt out and overpowered him. He was bound down. Bandhumati was now fully at their mercy. The eyes and the mind of the florist were certainly not bound. He was mighty anguished. 'Mudgarpani,' said he exasperated, 'Your wooden idol served to bait me thus. Fie upon me for having offered fragrant *Kasharpan* flowers in bonquets to you when such calamity befalls me in your presence!'

It was like an attack of dementia. Suddenly there was a thunderous bang. The ropes that bound him were torn. He appeared in a fearsome and diabolical demeanour. He lifted the demigod's club *(mudgar)* and did all the seven to death. And still his fury was not quietened.

Arjuna's flower-grove lay beside the highway. It was a thorough arc but somehow the event of the temple evaded people's attention. The florist killed the next batch of seven persons (six males, and one female) the next day. The town was in terror. The guards did their best but he could not be caught.

Rajgriha, blessed with the sermons of fearlessness and where the Lord's non-violence flowed freely like a stream, the very air filled with the nectar of devotion and austerity, was smothered with a sinister environment. It was a challenge to Mahavira himself. His non-violence, will and *dharma* were at stake. He took the challenge. He went to Rajgriha and stayed in Gunashilak chaitya. Rajgriha people learnt of his arrival. But who dare visit such an accursed and demonaic spot? The ghastly vision of Arjuna with his fatal mace froze their blood. The people were keen to go but shortlived would be their enthusiasim.

Sudarshan was not to be so easily disheartened. He was determined to visit the Lord. His cultivation of freedom from body-consciousness was absolute. Little did he fear death.

Said he to his parents, 'Dear parents! Mahavira camps at Gunashilaka chaitya.'

'We have also heard of it, son.'

'What should be our duty in the circumstances?'

'It is to pay him respects but...'

'Where there is fear there is 'but'...'

'Should not we value our life, then?'

'Spiritualism is valuable many times over. If I sacrifice a less valued treasure for a precious one I should thank my stars.'

'Dear son! Shrenik, the king of Magadh has still to pay his respects to Mahavira. What ails us then to out-Herod Herod?'

'The question of *dharma* is supreme. The hierachies don't obtain in its realm. The crux is earnestness. Can't we out-do the king in earnest devotion?'

'You can!'

'Then why do you drag me with the imperial example?'

'We permit you good child, to seek his holy grace. May his grace bless you and ward off all evils.'

Sudarshan left his home equipped with the filial blessing. The friends and others did try to dissuade him but to little avail. Indeed, one fully determined is not desisted from one's course easily. Nothing short of the ultimate goal would satisfy him. He went unimpeded. He went alone, not unequipped with his sincere devotion. Now he was near Pratoli Gate. The guard interrogated him.

'Whither dost thouh goeth young man?'

'To Gunashilaka chaitya!'

'What for?'

'To greet Lord Mahavira.'

'I appreciate your devotion but is it not a suicide?'

'Might be it is so. However, my express purpose is not to commit suicide.'

'The royal decree declares it out of bounds. Are you unaware of it?'

'I know it. The purpose I traverse it for is not subject to decrees of laiety. When I have a scant fear for that which scares people why should I be forbidden to go thither?'

The guard had no reply to offer. Sudarshan moved ahead. Each step of his echoed over the path. There was no hitch, no hestitation. To Sudarshan each dust particle along the road reflected the image of Mahavira. Each step was an echo declaiming Mahavira's philosophy.

Arjuna wandered about the path. He was like the shadow of death. He saw Sudarshan arriving like a God-send. He pounced upon him. Fear scrambled to devour up invincibility. Devotion and wantonness were to fight out a duel. Sudarshan had braced himself up. He embraced an initiation into equanimity. An armour of resolution shielded him and he stood as if prepared to surrender the body. It was evident that the meditation was not to be disturbed till the ultimate merger would occur.

Arjuna roared as he came near.

'Who you be? What be your name? Are you an orphan? Did none counsel you properly? Don't you know the spot has in store a sudden and certain death for you? What make you mute? Why this nonchalance? Then be ready to suffer this deadly mace of Mudgarpani.'

Sudarshan was absorbed in his meditation. No word was uttered, nor a tremor felt. Arjuna was infuriated. He attempted to raise the mace high up but his arm was, as if, paralysed. Arjuna strained himself to the utmost but with no result. He had no will left. His fury was gone.

Arjuna was once more the original Arjuna. His person was numb and powerless. He could not stand anymore and fell prostrate at Sudarshan's feet.

Sudarshan saw that the affectation was gone. The dark clouds of fear had been scattered without any showers. He opened his half-closed lids. The body-consciousness was surrendered completely. He remembered Mahavira and put his soothing palm over Arjuna's head.

He was again his true self. The first ray of awakening shone in the sky of his consciousness. Now in awareness he repeated his questions :

'What you be?'

'I am a follower of Lord Mahavira?'

'Where do you go?'

'To pay respects to Lord Mahavira?'

'Could I accompany you?'

'None is prohibited to see him.'

Arjuna went to the Lord with Sudarshan. The guards reported to the king that the calamity was over. The highway was safe once more. The evil was put under control. Arjuna had accompanied Sudarshan to Lord Mahavira. The highway was thrown open to the people.

The Lord was non-violence personified. He was all goodwill and compassion. His very proximity took one's cruelty away. Arjuna's heart was once more tender with love. As the dark and moon-lit fortnights occur alternately, so do the mental frames of man. The minds overpowered with darkness with light dim their consciousness. The minds dominated with light overpower the dark and brighten up their consciousness. The Lord filled the consciousness of Arjuna with light. The torch of equanimity lent his heart a soft undying glow. Now he was a monk.

To the common people it was incredible that within a day a devil-incarnate should become a saint. The conversion was too dramatic to be true. It is not commonly known that such changes do occur. Radical changes must occur in a dramatic manner. And still the ordinary folk would not accept a dramatic occurrence. Those who had suffered at his hands refused to recognise his sanctity.

Since it was the Lord who had initiated Arjuna into equanimity, the latter attained higher and higher elevation. He was utterly indifferent to honour and disgrace, gain and loss, life and death, pleasure and pain etc.

Sometime later Monk Arjuna went on his round to beg meals in the town of Rajgriha. Families would shout—This man killed my father. He killed my brother, Here goes my son's murderer—or mother's, wife's or friend's. Some would abuse him, some taunted him, some reprimanded and other's beat him. It was obviously the nemesis visiting him. Arjuna realised it full well. Once he would eat without water to drink. Another time it was water that served him as a meal. However he was apathetic to such bodily wants. Equanimity was his *forte.* Equanimity as reflected in his conduct won over the people in due course. Violence had been cleansed by an ablution into non-violence.[1]

---

[1] 'Antgadadsao', 6.

3. THE PLANE OF TOLERANCE

Metarya was born in a family of untouchables. He was initiated into Lord Mahavira's order. As a monk he pursued knowledge and equanimity to a high degree of advancement. The light within was all illumination. Now he had gone beyond the limits of the order of monkhood. He did his pursuit alone. He came to Rajgriha. He visited the door of a goldsmith for begging meals. The host was overjoyed to see a monk at his door. He greeted the monk and asked him to wait till he found out whether the meals were ready in the kitchen. While the goldsmith was inside a pair of cranes perched there gulped the ornaments lying in the shop.

The goldsmith came out to summon the monk inside. He was shocked to learn that the ornaments were missing. Angrily he enquired of the monk what he had to say about it. He was silent. Said the goldsmith, 'A moment back the gold ornaments lay here. Till I had come back none visited the shop. Who else should be answerable for this loss but you?'

The monk was still silent.

The goldsmith insisted on a reply. The taciturnity of the monk was too much for the artisan.

'Please monk! The ornaments don't belong to me. They belong to king Shrenik. I am engaged by him to manufacture ornaments for his females. Can't you guess how I will be treated if I fail to find his ornaments? You embraced monkhood after renouncing great wealth. You were the king's son-in-law. You have joined Lord Mahavira's order whom I worship. Please don't lose sight of your great renunciation, the great Lord Mahavira who has initiated you and of my plight. Pray be not greedy; Return to me my ornaments. To err is human. You are only aspirant yet and not a great Master. Hence you are liable to commit such peccadiloes. As yet the thing is a secret between me and you. Pray listen to my fervent appeal, return to me my ornaments and expiate for your sin.'

The saint was unresponsive to all this appeal. The artisan thought that the saint had fallen in for the gold and deserved some punishment. He closed the door and brought some wet hide. He tied the saint's head with it tightly. The saint rolled down. The sun scorched the leather and the head of the saint.

The Monk found the ire of the artisan rather justified. He, certainly, was afraid of the imminent royal wrath. The monk could not utter the truth as it would result in the death of the cranes. The whirlwind of the events was to demand somebody's death. Why not scrifice myself, said he to himself.

He resolved to sacrifice himself. He engaged himself in meditation. The mind lost all contact with the body. When the mind sticks to the body the pain is magnified. When the mind is fully concentrated the dispassion acts like an analgesic. This is the fruit of equanimity.

Struggles are inevitable in life. This mortal awareness can either be keenly felt and suffered or siezed through the transcendental consciousness and thus suborned. Attraction and aversion generate these tensions. Cutting the Gordian knot of this tension is the remedy and the means is awareness that transcends tensions. Where this equanimity is born, there is born the transcendental awareness. The culmination of equnimity is the culmination of transcendental awareness. At this stage equanimity and freedom of attraction-aversion overlap. The means becomes the end. In the material world the duality continues but these dual images are obliterated from consciousness. Equanimity *par excellence,* freed of all clashes, emerges as an ineffable perfect feeling. Neither clash remains nor equanimity. Pure consciousness alone remains.

33

A Mind Emancipated

The clock on the wall indicates nine o'clock. Do all the clocks indicate so? No. One might be slow by a couple of minutes, another fast. Time passes with a graduated pace. It neither slows nor speeds up. It maintains a uniform pace.

A clock is not time. It is only a metre to guage time. Like all equipments it may lose or gain time. This variation in pace indicates that the time and the clock are not identical.

Spiritualism and spiritual institutions are also not identical. Truth is not subject to time and space. By a change of locale spiritualism does not change itself. The principles applicable to India are as much applicable to Japan. The norms valid for one place are as much valid for another. The *dharma* valid in the past is as valid today and shall be so tomorrow since it is not subject to lapse of time.

When we are thirsty we take water. We shun to take meals then. This action is guided by the universal law that water quenches thirst all over the globe at all times. Such natural laws are called truth.

When we are inwardly disturbed we turn towards religion. We seek to alleviate our tensions by means of religion and spiritualism rather than by seeking wealth. There is a constant law behind it. Spiritual experience mitigates mental perturbation at every time and in every clime. It is a universal law.

Truth is one. There is no separate truth for *shramanas* and for Vedic saints. Vedic religion, *Shramana* religion, Jainism and Buddhism are institutions and the means is not spiritualism itself. Since these are not *dharma* there can be many and sometimes contradictory systems. These systems seek to catch truth by its letter as a child attempts to catch the sun by its reflection in the pond.

A man sits inside a room. The room is closed. There is an open small window covered with wire-mesh. He can watch the sky through this window. Of course, he cannot see the entire sky through it. The sky is not as much limited as he can thus see. The sky thus observed is also not observed unobstructed.

Once Lord Mahavira said to Gautam, 'When *dharma* is not seen by the seer directly it is seen through the wire-mesh of words. Conjecture is the wire-mesh that covers the window. Multiple sects and systems result from such an indirect observation. The path suggested to you Gautam is the direct path of the seer. Be vigilant and be a seer of *dharma*.'[1]

Lord Mahavira was the seer of *dharma*, He had observed the attribute relevant to the unconscious part of the universe and the attribute relevant to the conscious part. He was a realist. He propounded nothing prompted by fear, greed or exaggeration.

Acharya Hemchandra writes, 'Lord! You enunciated truth as a realist. Hence you never revealed angularities that the neo-scholars that invent fantastic systems do.'

Relativism and realism go hand in hand. One cannot be a realist in the absence of a relativistic approach. The converse is also true. Lord Mahavira had a masterly grip over relativism and realism that enabled him to grasp the truth that transcends systems and orders.

1. The Lord arrived at Rajgriha from Kaushambi and stayed at Gunashilaka chaitya. Gautam visited the streets of the town

---

[1] 'Uttarajjhayani', 10/31.

for begging meals. He heard whispers in the town—'Certain followers of Parshva camp at Pushpawati chaitya outside Tungika. Certain aspirants questioned these sectarians of Lord Parshwa.'

Gautam probed these inquirers regarding their enquiries and the respective answers.

The question put to them was, 'What is the reward of restraint and austerity?'

The monks replied, 'Restraint prevents future bondages. Austerity tears asunder the already existing bondages.'

The next question was, 'Restraint was meant for preventing future bondages and austerity for destroying earlier bondages. Then what factors result in an incarnation on a divine plane?'

Kaliyaputta had replied :

'The individual self exists on divine plane, by virtue of austerities performed in the past.'

Mehil had said, 'The individual self is born in divine realms by virtue of restraint performed in the past. Anandarakshita had said, 'The individual self is born in divine realms by virtue of residual karmas.

Saint Kashyap had said, 'It is on account of the weakening of attachment that individual self is born in divine realms.'

Gautam approached the Lord and narrated to him the dialogues. He asked, 'Sire! Were the solutions given by the followers of Parshwa correct? Are they competent to answer such queries? Are they enlightened ones? Are they seasoned individuals and superior sages?'

'The answers of the saintly followers of Parshwa are correct. They are capable of offering correct solutions. Solutions offered by me are identical.'

'What is the result of devoting to such *shramanas* sire? What are the obvious advantages?

'One gains knowledge.'

'What use this knowledge, sire?'

'One gains refined knowledge of subtle modes and their distinctions.'

'What are its advantages, sire?'

'One grows in discretion to discern the self from the non-self.'

'What use this discretion, sire?'

'Restraint is the reward.'

'What use that, sire?'

'The link that binds the self with the non-self is ruptured.'

'What use that, sire?'

'One grows in the capacity to be austere.'

'What use austerity, sire?'

'The latencies are exhausted.'

'What use that, sire?'

'Restlessness of the mind is gone.'

'What use that, sire?'

'The final attainment is the reward.'[1]

2. The *dharmatirtha* of Lord Parshwa was different from that of Lord Mahavira. The monks of his order differed in views from those of Lord Mahavira. They, at times, expressed disagreement with Mahavira's doctrines. Still Lord Mahavira commended the knowledge-ability of Parshwa's disciples although with a reservation.

The monastic orders of those days cared little for popularity. They devoted themselves wholeheartedly to spiritual pursuits and quest of truth. Hence they were free from dogmatism. When the Jain monks grew keen on popularity they adopted a practice to avoid greeting monks of other sects. It was believed that Jain householders would be less respectful if they find their monks offering courtesies to those of other sects. They might find these other monks to be worthier of respect than the Jain monks. Hence to monopolies their wholehearted respect it was ordained that no respect be shown to monks belonging to other sects.

---

1. 'Bhagwai', 2/92-111.

During the days of Mahavira it was different. Mutual behaviour was on a free unrestricted footing. Lord said to Gautam, 'Gautam! You are to meet a friend of yours today.'

'Who is it, sire?'

'You will meet Skandaka.'

'When shall I see him, sire?'

'He is on way to this place. He is not far now. In a short while he will be here.'

'Will my friend seek precept from you, sire?'

'Yes he will.'

Before the Lord had finished, Skandaka arrived. Gautam on seeing him rose and came forward to receive him.

'Welcome to you Skandaka. Doubly welcome is your arrival. Hearty welcome to you.'[1]

3. In Shravasti near Kritangala there was an abode of roving monks of Vedic order. Acharya Gardbhal was their master. One Jain monk Pingal lived in the town. One day he visited the abode[2]. He enquired of Skandaka—

1. Planes of existence are finite or infinite?
2. Lives are finite or infinite?'
3. Liberations *(Moksha)* are finite or infinite?
4. Liberated souls are finite or infinite?
5. What kind of death induces the individual self to strengthen the inertia of repeated incarnations and what kind weaking it?

Skandaka felt quite confused at this volley of queries. He failed to reply to these. Pingal repeated his questions. Skandaka had no choice but to be quiet. Pingal returned unsatisfied.

The freedom of coming, going and free questioning in these saintly abodes indicates the absence of restrictions in all matters theological during those days.

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 2/20-36.

[2] Eleventh year of tirthankarhood.

Skandaka learnt of Lord Mahavira's visit to Sharavasti from Kritangala. Why not consult Lord Mahavira on these tricky issues, thought he. Where was the hitch in going there for the purpose? He uninhibitedly went there. The Lord unreservedly replied to the queries of Skandaka.

'Skandaka! As far as matter and extent are concerned, the universe is finite. From the point of view of time and mode it is infinite.

'Similarly, individual self, *moksha* and liberated souls are finite so far as the matter and extent are concerned and infinite so far as the time and mode are concerned.

'Deaths are of two kinds—childish or stupid death and wise death *(Balmaran* and *Panditmaran).* One dying a childish death prolongs the chain of incarnations while one dying the wise death shortens it.'

The solutions offered by the Lord enlightened Skandaka. Willingly did he submit to the Lord's initiation[1].

4. Lord Mahavira camped at Gunshilaka abode[2]. Around were the lodgings of monks of different orders.

One day Kalodayi, Sheelodayi and other Vedic monks were discussing the enunciation of five *Astikayas* by Mahavira. Said they, 'Saint Mahavira propounds five *astikayas* (ontological categories) :—

1. *Dharmastikaya*
2. *Adharmastikaya*
3. *Pudgalastikaya*
4. *Akashastikaya*
5. *Jivastikaya*

'The first four categories are inanimate, according to him and the fifth animate *(jiva).* The four categories he calls formless and the Pudgalastikaya with a form. How can this doctrine be accepted?'

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 2/44-53.

[2] Twenty-second year of tirthankarhood.

'While the Vedic saints thus conferred, a follower of Jainism, Madduka, passed that way to visit Gunashilaka chaitya. A Vedic saint proposed, 'We know that *shramana* Mahavira propounds five *astikayas.* Better to consult Madduka about it. They all decided to go and consult Madduka. Said they to him—

'Madduka your preceptor Mahavira propounds five categories, ontological. Four of these are inanimate and one animate. The first four are formless and the last one with a form. When the *astikayas* are not perceptible, how shall we accept these?'

Madduka said to the Vedic saints, 'We perceive or infer that which performs some function. While that which does not perform anything remains imperceptible and uninferred.'

The Vedic saints spoke out simultaneously, 'What a follower of Jainism you are that you cannot see or infer *astikayas?'*

'May you live long! The wind is blowing. Don't you agree to it?'

'We do.'

'Do you see the wind?'

'No, we can't see it.'

'Deos not the odorific matter enter the nostrils.'

'It does.'

'Do you see this odorific matter entering the nostrils?'

'No. We don't.'

'Does fire inhere in the *arani*?'[1]

'Yes. It does.'

'Can you perceive the hidden fire?'

'No we can't.'

'Do you see the yonder shore of sea?'

'No.'

'Don't the divine planes exist?'

'Yes.'

---

[1] A kind of fuel.

'Do you see the shapes of divine planes?'

'We don't.'

Just as the imperceptibility of these does not detract from their existence, the imperceptibility of things does not indicate their non-existence. If perceptibility be the only criterion you have to deny most of the existing things.'

Madduka thus quitened the saints. Then he visited Lord Mahavira. Said the Lord to Madduka, 'That which functions is inferred and that which does not function cannot be inferred. It is a sound argument. The enunciation of the unknown, unseen, unheard, untestified and unproved is a myth.'

The same Vedic saints repeated their questions to Gautam. Gautam said, 'May gods bless you! We don't propound that which does not exist and don't deny that which does. We propound that which certainly exists and deny that which does not at all exist. The Lord has propounded the things that do exist.'

The Vedic saints were silenced but they were not fully satisfied.

Gautam saw the Lord. Vedic saint Kalodayi followed him. The Lord was discussing religion in a huge congregation. The Lord addressed himself to Kalodayi, 'Kalodayi'. Your group discussed that saint Mahavira propounds the five ontological categories and that which is not evident to the senses cannot be admitted.'

'Yes, sire!' said Kalodayi.

'Tell me Kalodayi, who is it that doubts the five categories.'

'The self, sire.'

'Does the self exist?'

'It certainly does. The inanimate cannot have a doubt.'

'That which you call self *(atma),* I call *Jivastikaya.'*

'This category is acceptable, sire. But the case of *dharmas tikaya* and *Adharmastikaya* is different. How to accept these?'

'The fish swims in the water. Who has the capacity to swim—the fish or the water?'

'The capacity lies in the fish and not in the water. The latter only supports this function.'

'Similarly, the animate *(Jiva)* and the inanimate *(pudgal)* need an impetus in their movement, The category that lends it this impetus is a *dharmastikaya.'*

''What is the purpose behind *Adharmastikaya ?'*

'It's the scorching sun. A traveller passes by a shadowy tree. The traveller halts under its shade. Shadow becomes instrumental in his static inertia. That which becomes instrumental in static inertia is *Adharmastikaya.'*

'What use the space then, sire?'

'Space awards support but not static condition. Of course, dynamic and static inertia both exist within it.'

'What is *pudgal* (non-self, gross matter) then, sire?'

'Do you see the flower blossoming on this climber?'

'Yes, sire. It is red in colour.'

'What is its peculiarity?'

'Smell is its peculiarity.'

'Why does a bee buzz on it?'

'To collect nectar from it!'

'How will you find its touch?'

'Most delicate, sire?'

'Kalodayi', that which has colour, smell, taste and touch is *Pudgalastikaya* according to me.'

'Sire! Can an individual sit over *Dharmastikaya, Adharmastikaya,* and *Akashastikaya?* Can one lie or stand over these?'

'No. One can't. It is only *Pudgal* that can lend support to an individual.'

All the doubts of Kalodayi were now gone[1]. He sought initiation from the Lord[2].

These incidents reveal the openness of mind and free exchange of ideas that were in vogue then.

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 18/134-142.

[2] Ibid 7/220.

34

A Move For Reconciliation

Water and fire are inimical to each other by their very nature. The two cannot exist together. Fire is hot and water cold. Cold extinguishes the heat. Don't heat and cold bear some relation with each other? When water exterminates fire how can one conceive a relationship between the two? But water and fire both constitute matter. How can one kind of matter be totally unrelated with another kind? It is reconciliation that paves the two problematic banks. Lord Mahavira paved the heat with the cold. According to him the hot is not only hot but cold as well. Similarly, the cold is not cold but hot as well. The hot and the cold are relatively so. The heat that melts the butter is hot for the butter but not so for the iron. It cannot melt with ordinary heat.

All the ingredients of the universe are in some way related with one another. Nothing is totally identical with another thing and nothing is totally different. We deem certain things as similar and certain other things as dissimilar. The cause does not bear relevance to the thing in itself? In fact, it originates from our point of view. If we wish to detect similarity, we do so. If we wish to detect differences we also do so. Since both the observations are possible, we detect whichever of it we wish to.

Similarity and dissimilarity are in the nature of a thing hence no realistic approach can be absolute and non-relative.

Lord Mahavira introduced the principle of reconciliation in thought as well as in conduct. The doctrine evolved by him not only preserved the principle intellectual agreeability but also gave it a great impetus. But in mutual behaviour it has not only been neglected but even discarded.

Haribhadrasuri presented atheism as a philosophic system and thus reinforced the reconciliatory approach. Theistic systems had not imagined to see atheism earning such a status in the assembly of philosophical systems. We owe this land-marks in the history of philosophical systems to Haribhadra.

Upadhyaya Yashovijaya was confronted with the poser—Who is a theist and who an atheist? He examined the issue in the wider perspective and found that none is a complete atheist nor a theist. Charwaka does not accept the existence of self. Hence he is an atheist. Now non-relativists do not accept various attributes of things. Why are they not included amongst the atheists then? If the non-relativists are theists when they accept attributes, why Charwaka is not included among the theists when he accepts attributes?

Acharya Aklanka said, 'A self is a self by virtue of its attribute of consciousness. Other attributes do not count in its selfhood. The self and the non-self also have numerous common attributes.'

Masters Siddhasena, Samantabhadra, Akalanka, Haribhadra, Hemchandra etc. promoted the comprehensive approach with the result that diverse views merged into the ocean of Jain philosophy.

Non-dualism of Vedanta is the sangraha-naya of Jainism, Materialism of Charwaka is its Vyavahar-naya, Buddhistic theory of modes is the Rijusutra-naya of Jainism. The Shabdavraita grammarians is the shabdanaya of Jainism. Jainism accepts the truth of all these views with a provison—they are true if they evince a comprehensive attitude with due respect for different views rather than attempting to thrive at the latter's expense. A catholicity is an attitude of truth.

Liberal interpretation is a true interpretation. Truth is essentially multiple and cannot be understood from one angle of vision nor expressed in one word.

In the context of liberal, inclusive attitude, it is natural to question whether Mahavira combined in his philosophy opinions of diverse sects or he had an original philosophy of his own.

Mahavira has been described as omniscient and truly vast in vision. He knew all that occured and observed everything. Omniscience and vast vision is the foundation on which he built the superstructure of his philosophy. The salient features of his doctrine are each *dravya* (substance) has innumerable attributes and each attribute is invariably accompanied by its opposite attribute. Thus in each substance infinite equal and opposite modalities inhere. The system is not a mere combination of divergent views. The doctrine has evolved the great comprehensive approach itself into a matchless philosophical instrument. This comprehensive and reconciliatory attitude is not unprecedented. However, the doctrine of each substance possessing infinite counterbalancing attributes is novel.

Universal and particular, both are the attributes of substance. Hence one who has grasped the Mahavira's system will neither support nor refute the universalistic Vedanta nor the particularistic Buddhism. He finds both the views reconciliable. When we forget the modes and attend to the substance only, we find the universal as universal and Vedant as Vedanta. When we ignore the substance and observe modes only we find the particular as particular and the dual as dual. However, a follower of Mahavira can never forget that no substance is without its modes nor any mode without the substance. To exclusively attend to the universal or the particular is a matter of perspective. The universal and the particular float together in the ocean of reality.

The inclusive genius appreciates the comprehensive nature of the thing by discovering the link that connects the external with the internal, gross with the subtle, tangible with the intangible.

Is the society that follows Mahavira comprehensive in its approach? A theoretical analysis won't offer an answer to this question. An analysis of difference of thought-process, hatred and personal or sectarian vanity will offer the solution. The thinking of people, even in the same society is diverse. So long as differences cancel out one another the people tolerate one another. When the vanities flare up, the intellectual difference's cause mass-asseverations. Mass-hatred and vanities cause differences and distances in such hostile circumstances. The intellectual attempts are not fruitful to effect any practical reconciliation. Non-violent reconciliation alone can bring about an amatory mutuality. The doctrine of reconciliation enunciated by Lord Mahavira has an intellectual content on the material plane and a non-violent one of the human plane.

It was certainly a Herculean task to initiate intellectual and behavioural reconciliation through non-violent means.

35

The Common Welfare

One has to have a different eye to witness different objects. The implied meaning of the dictum is acceptable but its literal meaning is not true.

The master asked the disciple, 'Who is it that sees?'

'The eye.'

'Can the eye see in the dark!'

'The eye in combination with the light can see.'

'The eye and the light both are there but the subject is indifferent. Can the object be seen?'

'Let me amend my statement. The mind, the light and the eye collaborate to see.'

'A child saw the fire and inserted his hand into it. Had he not seen the fire?'

'The child lacks wisdom. True vision requires all the four equipments—wisdom, the mind, the eye and the light.'

'I have seen a wise man gambling. Does he properly see?'

'He truly sees who is blessed by the grace-abounding hand of existence.'

An individual has two aspects—his individuality and the essential existence. Existence means *to be*. Individuality means—to be something! When we mark the name and form etc., we observe the individuality. When we observe the degree of awareness, we see the existence that operates behind the individuality.

Had Mahavira's individuality prevailed upon his essential existence, his tongue would have been soft and heart hard. Since his speech and heart both are superlatively tender we infer that his core of existence dominated his individuality.

So far as his individual aspect is concerned he is the orginator of an order, the spokesman of the *dharma* of order and the initiator of a system. So far as the existance is concerned he simply is. *To be* is his essence. Essentially, he is neither a preceptor nor a follower, neither a spokesman of a *dharma* nor a listener, neither a dualist nor a non-dualist. Dual and non-dual, interpretation and acceptance, theological law-giving and submission to it are all branches of individuality. The entire career of Mahavira moves from individuality to existence. He says :—[1]

'That which you want to kill is you yourself.
'That which you want to rule is you yourself.
'That which you want to satisfy is you yourself.
'That which you want to enslave is you yourself.
'That which you want to torture is you yourself.'

Seeing these maxims a non-dualist will say—Mahavira was a non-dualist. A student of Jainism will be confused why Mahavira being a dualist adopted the terminology of a non-dualist. Mahavira is away from both. He is a votary of existence. The non-dual and the dual, both, originate from existence. Hence a votary of existence sometimes borrows the idiom of non-dualism and sometimes that of dualism. The unititive quality of *to be* lacks in 'to be something'. 'To be something' implies discrimination. In it the latencies of violence are not gone. None would wish injury or violence to oneself. If no self is different from me how would I kill anybody? On the plane of existence it is a unititive experience. This is non-violence. The self is the violence and the self is the non-violence. The concept of difference and discrimination between the self and the self is violence and the concept of identity between the self and the self is non-violence. Where *to be*, alone is there, the question of identity and difference does not arise. On this plane only *to be* is true. On the plane of individuality Mahavira's logic is different. He says 'Kill no creature.'

---

[1] 'Ayaro', 5/101.

The age of Mahavira was marked by ritualistic sacrifices. The Brahmins freely supported the ritualistic violence. Their doctrine was that a killing of creatures in the service of religion is innocent. To eradicate such an injury the Lord induced the reflection on one's own self. Said he, 'Pray, let me know whether you shun pleasure or pain?'

None would claim to shun pleasure. Such a self-evident falsity none can say. They said, 'We shun pain.' The Lord added, 'As you shun pain, so do other creatures. The loss of life is the greatest fear in the world. Why then do you garb violence in non-violence? Why rationalise violence by spiritual subterfuge?'

In this idiom of non-dualism, the killer is not different from the killed. They have the same virtue, notwithstanding their separate identity viz. aversion to pain. Observing this common characteristic would quench all urge to violence.

In olden days Panchayats or Community-courts were there in vogue. Their judgments were as effective as that of a judical court. A man was indicted of stealing his neighbour's buffalo. The members of the community-court sat in a bench. They seated the accused before themselves. He did not admit the charge. They chose to adjudicate by the orthodox method of hot pan. The red hot frying-pan was to be put over his palm. If the palm was not charred the accused was to be acquitted, else convicted. The accused agreed to the procedure.

A member of the bench stood and began to put the hot pan with a pair of tongs over the palm of the accused. The latter however withdraw his hand. The member of the bench rebuked him. Said the accused, 'Please don't rebuke me. Your hand is my hand. Your pair of tongs is my pair of tongs.

I presume you are not a thief. Hence you may lift this pan with your bare hand and then put it over my palm.'

The plea of common characteristics changed the procedure of justice. The adjudicator withdrew himself quietly.

Lord Mahavira awakened millions of souls by this very argument of identity of souls.

Lord Buddha has exhorted man to seek human welfare. Lord Mahavira widened the span to include a universal welfare of all living beings.

Gautam asked, 'What is perennial *dharma?'*

'Non-violence.'

'Whose protection is aimed at by means of non-violence, sire?'

'Protection of all creatures.'

'Protection of a large number is possible by sacrificing a few. How can all be preserved?'

'In the pitcher of non-violence not one hole of enimity is left. Then alone it holds the water of equanimity.'

'Whom to convey the message of non-violence, sire?'

'To all and sundry, be they waking or asleep, in the proximity of existence or away from it, heading towards existence or otherwise, acquisitive or non-acquisitive, craving for bondage or deliverance.

This message of non-violence conduces to a universal welfare. Hence disseminate it everywhere.'[1]

Lord Mahavira's orientation was towards existence hence individual distinctions never barred his progress. The individualist priests protected the interests of the bourgeois. Their code was multi-pronged. For the rich it had one set of norms, and for the poor another. The highplaced ought to realize service and the low-placed offer to them their service and suffer their excesses. Religion patronised this system. Lord Mahavira discarded it as patently bad. Said he, 'It is a clumsy attempt to protect the vested interests of the high-born. It

---

1. 'Ayaro', 4/3, 4.

is not moral; it is utterly immoral. It works against common welfare.' He exhorted the monks to eradicate such a system thus—Monks! Wander far and wide. Preach the rich and the poor uniformly. The code of conduct for the high-born is identical with that for the low-born. I have propounded a common *dharma* for both.'

The differences of individuality should not encroach upon the sacrosanct realms of existence. The realm of *dharma* coincides with that of existence. It can keep itself intact by ignoring the individual differences.

The father of Nyaya philosophy, sage Gautam, has in his system approved of prevarication and subterfuge for the sake of religious advantage. It might be appreciated as a means of far-reaching significance for the benefit of a system. But in the context of existence it has no validity. Lord Mahavira insisted on strict non-violence even while arguing with an opponent. Triumph and defeat bear significance for an individualist. A votary of existence is indifferent to both. In the domain of consciousness the two disputationists are endowed with consciousness equally. Where is the significance of one winning over the other? The concern for success or failure is a privilege of the individualist. A votary of existence cares a fig for either.

In respect of disputations Lord Mahavira has laid down the following three principles :—

1. Disputation be had only to satisfy the genuine curiosity of a wisdom-seeker.
2. Success and failure be not precipitated in a disputation.
3. No argument and reason be adopted that might be unpalatable to the adversary.

A votary of existence does not regard an individual as an individual but as truth, as a radiance of conscious self. His piercing eye goes beyond individuality to where existence is. In that transcendental context the questions of who and whose follower have no relevance. Such narrow considerations arise in the petty context of individuality only. Truth is the norm in the domain of existence and pragmatism in that of individuality.

Lord Mahavira was a votary of existence but he was aware of the expectations of an individual. To advance an individual towards pure existence, his individuality was also to be made instrumental. Said the Lord, 'Monks! Before discussing religion with an individual, keep in mind who he is and and whose votary.'

Once he was at Rajgriha. A few monks of Lord Parshwa's creed visited him. They expressed their query, 'Lord! In the infinite world the days and nights that passed were finite or infinite?'

'Infinite.'

'What leads you to believe so, sire?'

'You have studied the views of Lord Parshwa. I owe this knowledge to him. Lord Parshwa has affirmed that the planes of existance are infinite with no beginning and no end. Since they are beginningless and endless the days and nights would also be infinite.'[1]

Lord Mahavira was the creator of *tirthas* (moral orders) and canons. Hence he hardly needed to qoute another. Still he referred to the word of Lord Parshwa. The sole purpose was to bring home the truth to Lord Parshwa's followers. Citing the testimony of Lord Parshwa was certainly felicitous in the circumstances. Hence he did so. Besides, he meant to convey that truth is inherently true. Enunciation at another's hands does not lend it its veracity. The sage witnesses the patent truth that does not borrow its veracity from exposition by somebody.

The Lord recited Vedic hymns to bring home the self to Gautam.[2] The Lord's relativism operated behind it. It is the self-same truth for all and it is amenable to all. It is nobody's privileged possession. It is nobody's prerogative to give it

---

1. 'Bhagwai', 5/254, 255.
2. 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. p. 336.

an exposition. To propound this fact, the Lord resorted to excerpts from other authorities. The curious would thus be convinced that the desired solution had been available in their own scriptures already.

36

Conversion

Some people question : Are the Jains Hindus or not? It is a complicated question and similar should be its solution. Jainism is no caste. It is a religion *(dharma),* a metaphysics, a system. Indians have created many religions. The two main branches are *shramana* and Vedic. *Shramana* religion is based on thoughts conceived by man while the Vedic system relies on God-ordained Vedas. If the question were—Are the Jains Vedic or not? or Are the Vedics Jain or not? Or Are the Buddhists Vedic or not? the answer could be easily offered. Jains are not Vedic and Vedics are not Jain. The two are inspired by different ideologies. Hence they are not identical. However, both are Hindus. Hinduism is a caste. Jainism and Vedic ideologies are not castes. These are systems of thought. If we revert to the age of Lord Mahavira we find numerous religions existing in one family. A husband would be Vedic and his wife Jain or *vice versa.* Or a husband would be a Buddhist while his wife Jain or a husband would be Ajiwake (a sect established by Goushalaka Mekhaliputra) and his wife a Buddhist. Adoption of a religion did not hamper their matrimonial life. Conversion was very common. A Jain would adopt Buddhism and *vice versa.* A Jain would become Vedic and *vice versa.* It was not conversion but only an ideological change. Amongst Indian castes such new adoption of ideologies was freely allowed. King Pradeshi was an atheist. He did not subscribe to posthumous existence and reincarnation.

His minister Chitta was a staunch theist. He was a follower of Lord Parshwa. On his persuasion Pradeshi visited *shramana* Kumar Keshi. His views underwent a change. He accepted the ideology of monk Kumar Keshi.[1] Skandaka, Ammada and many other Vedic monks were initiated by Lord Mahavira.[2] It cannot be said that Jains, Buddhists and Ajiwakas were not initiated into Vedic religion. Such adoptions of a new idology were one's own concern. It was not treated as a change of caste. It did not affect their national consciousness either. It never went beyond their intellectual content. Hence every religion endorsed it.

Shrenik, the king of Magadha was much-talked-about figure then. His father was Prasenjita who was a follower of Lord Parshwa. Shrenik subscribed to his ancestral religion. Once Prasenjita exiled Shrenik in a fit of anger.

He sought refuge in a Buddhistic abbey and adopted Buddhism. After ascending the throne he continued to be a Buddhist. His queen Chellana was a follower of Lord Parshwa although her husband was Lord Buddha's follower. However, both craved to follow a common religion. Shrenik desired her to become a Buddhist while she naturally wanted him to become a Jain. Notwithstanding their ideological differences, they enjoyed an excellent matrimonial life. Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha, both, embody non-violence, fellow-feeling, peace and tolerance. Both preached mutual love. The king and the queen never felt any aversion for each other.

Once Shrenik went to Mandikuksha chaitya for an outing. There he found a monk meditating, standing. He was a young, handsome man. Shrenik could not take his eyes off the charming monk. The tranquil grace of the monk was a thing to gaze at. He approached the monk and said,

'May I know, sire, who you be? Pray let me know where you hail from.'

---

1. 'Rayapasenaiyam', verse 789.
2. Vide, II shatak of 'Bhagwati' and 'Auppatik' Sutra.

Concluding his meditation, he said, 'Worthy king! I found none who would offer me shelter. Hence I became a monk.'

'I wonder why nobody offered you protection.'

'But it is a fact.'

'I beseech you to kindly accompany me. Let me be your shelter and refuge. My palace is open to you with all of its regal amenities.'

'You are as much in need of a refuge as I am. What shelter can you offer me?'

The candidness was none-too-pleasant to the king. Said he, 'You are a monk not a householder. Didn't your preceptor Lord Mahavira preach to you how valuable truth is?'

'He certainly did.'

'Why, then, do you call me refugeless? Don't you know my identity?'

'I very much do. I know you are in need of a shelter.'

'I fail to understand you. I have my kingdom, army, coffers and the power to award punishment and pardon. How do you call me refugeless?'

'Let me tell you who is shelterless and who is not. I don't belong to a family of paupers. My father is a wealthy man of Kaushambi. I owned immense wealth and parental affection. I enjoyed my life with my parents. One day I felt a severe pain in my eyes. It was simply unbearable. My parents obtained the best treatment for me. Well-known physicians were summoned but it was worse than ever. My father spent huge sums for me but to no avail. Equally keen were my mother, brother and kins and equally unsuccessful. My wife shed tears. She forwent her meals. She kept attending on me day and night and still there was no relief. I felt completely refugeless. There was none who could grant me a moment's confort. I remembered the Lord's utterance. I attempted to seek relief in my own self. I vowed to surrender myself body and soul to him, if I would survive my optic malady. The sun rose after a comfortless deadly night. My pain was completely dissolved in my vow. My unhappiness was miraculously cured to the astonishment of my relatives and physicians. When they knew of my vow of renunciation they were crest-fallen. I learnt that the refugeless people desire others also to remain exposed and unprotected like them. I was not to be so esily dissuaded. I embraced monkhood.'

The autobiography of the monk became the tale of conersion of Shrenik. He was not only enamoured of the piety of the monk, he decided to seek initiation from Lord Mahavira and be a monk himself.[1]

In Buddhistic scriptures are various narrations of conversion to Buddhism. Shrenik became a devotee of Buddha. Abhayakumar was Shrenik's son. He was a man of parts and served as his counsel also. He was devoutly attached to Lord Mahavira. He went to Lord Buddha and adopted his religion after some discussions.

Religious conversion was admittedly in vogue during those days. But anecdotes connected with Abhayakumar hardly indicate that he had weaned himself to Buddhism. He had been initiated by Lord Mahavira and he was respected by his followers till the end.

Shrenik was reluctant to permit Abhayakumar to adopt his proposed monkhood. Abhayakumar was insistent. Shrenik ultimately agreed to it that if he someday uttered 'You may go away,' that will release him from the household bondage.

It so happened that Shrenik was tormented with suspicion on his wife's conduct. He commanded prince Abhayakumar to reduce the palace to ashes and proceeded to Lord Mahavira's proximity. There his suspicion was cured. He rushed back. The flames and smoke were visible from afar. Abhayakumar was met in the way. Shrenik asked him, 'Alas, what is it that you have done?' 'The compliance of a regal decree,' replied the prince. Said Shrenik, 'Please go away. Pity that you have done it.' These were the words Abhayakumar had been waiting for impatiently. He had thus obtained the permission of the king to renounce and was initiated by Lord Mahavira.[1]

---

[1] Twentieth study in 'Uttaradhyayan Sutra'.

Many other sons of Shrenik thus sought initiation.[2] Meghkumar is remarkable amongst them. Many queens of Shrenik also were initiated in the Lord's order[3] Biographical events of his life indicate that the later part of his career was devoted to Lord Mahavira.

Bihar was during those days alive with religious ferment. Many *tirthankars* and spiritualists chose it where to unravel great spiritual mysteries. One truth found its manifestation through different mouths. One light burst out through many windows. However, the people sometimes vacillated whom to choose as their saviour.

Time and place are two historical factors of great magnitude. There comes a point of time when numerous great souls occur on earth. The era of Mahavira was such a one. Spiritualism was so vigorously stirred that till today we feel the mighty impact. However, the upheavals of thought let a few well-marked cracks which are called castes. That explains why people ask whether Jains are Hindus or not. Mahavira and Buddha exploded the rituals and orthodoxies of Vedic orgin. And the miracle is that none raised this bogey of casteism during those days and asked whether Buddhists are Hindus or not. Thanks to the pristine glory of the age, the lotus of spiritualism was far above the muddy surface of casteism.

---

1. 'Anuttarovavaidasao' 1/15, 'Awashyakchurni', II pt. p. 171.
2. 'Anuttarovavaidasao' 1/15.
3. 'Antgadadasao' Chapter 7, 8 (Some queens were initiated in the seventh year, other in the fourteenth of tirthankarhood.)

37

Realistic Personality Veiled in Exaggerations

As the time spreads the veil of antiquity over a great life, the followers gradually pile up miracles. There, perhaps, never was a great soul to offer an exception to this human failing.

Lord Mahavira was a thoroughgoing realist. A great realist himself, Acharya Samantbhadra says, 'Lord ! the aprearance of gods, divine planes and whisks are miracles that even wizards are seen to peform. You don't owe your greatness to these virtues but to your utterly rational and realistic view.'

Acharya Hemchandra once heard cross-claims of the protoganists of different religions. Some averred that the principle god Indra used to visit Lord Mahavira and prostrate in his holy feet while others challenged it. A third group found nothing surprizing in it as the Lord of the gods obliged their masters also accordingly. Acharya Hemchandra commented on this squabble thus : 'Lord one may deny or find parallels of Indra's visit to you but how will they deny or find instances of your realism?'

Mythological age was the age of miracles, exaggerations and heavenly events. The nebulous occurrences cast a veil of unreality over the entire period. The mythologists have ascribed numberless divine miracles to Vasudeo Krishana's life. Krishna, the great realist of Gita, witnesses round himself concentric rings of supernatural events. The masses are won over by divine impossibilities. Vaishnavites capitalised over these marvels. Common people were drawn towards these legends.

Buddhistic love also stylized itself accordingly. The realistic life of Lord Buddha was clouded by such myths. Jain masters, stuck to rationalism for a while. But the urge for popularity was likely to come to the fore. Jain authors were also taken in by this mythological strain. The realistic idol of Mahavira was heaped up with bonquets of myths and marvels. Here are some of the typical ones :

(1) The birth of Lord Mahavira synchronised with the shaking of Indra's throne. He could divine the cause viz. Mahavira's birth. It caused him a great happiness and he came to greet the Lord at his native place with his retinue of gods and goddesses. He showed respect to the Lord's mother and took the Lord to the top of the golden Meru mountain. When the gods stood in attendance to bathe the holy infant with one thousand and eight pitchers of water, Indra had his misgivings regarding the capacity of the infant to stand so much of water. The Lord could follow Indra's fear. Since his strength was truly Herculean, he pressed the mountain top a bit with his toe and the vast range began to shaka as in a quake. Indra realised his ignorance. He begged his forgiveness and poured holy waters over his head.

The incident is not recorded in the canonical literature nor in the respective commentaries. It is found in poetical literature. The poetic truth is at variance with the factual truth. Poetic truth owes its birth to the poet's fancy. The richer the poet's fancy, the keener the truth. Who fancied this myth is impossible to trace. Vinod Suri in 'Paumchariu,' Ravishesh in 'Padmapuran,' and Hemchandra in 'Trishashtishalakapurushacharitra' mention it.

Whoever the poet was who grafted this myth to Mahavira's biography must have had the desire to show him stronger than Krishna. Once Indra put the shepherds in a great jeopardy. To protect them adolescent Krishna lifted the Govardhan mountain up in his hand and kept it so for full seven days. Krishna of 'Bhagwat' is an adolescent while Mahavira of 'Paumchariu' is a justborn infant. Gowardhan mountain ranges upto two dozen miles while Meru upto two lac dozen miles. Krishna levered up the Gowardhan with his hand while Mahavira shook it with the thumb of his toe. The fancy of 'Paumchariu' is in no way inferior to that of 'Bhagwat'. In stamina Krishna could not excel over Mahavira.

(2) Kumar Vardhaman was eight. Once he was playing the game called 'Tindusak' with other princes. Indra commended his valour. A god descended on the earth to test his mettle. He personated as a child and joined him in the sport. The two ran to reach a particular tree. Vardhman outdid him in reaching and touching the tree and thus won. The god was defeated. According to the rules of the game the successful child rode the shoulders of the defeated one (who assumed an equine role in his frolics). Vardhman rode the defeated god in disguise of a child to reach the arena. The disguised child rose to touch the zenith. Vardhman could understand the divine disguise and hit him with his fist. The fist blow shortened the godly frame, who hung his head in shame before the human supremacy.[1]

Indra watched the whole occurrence from his empyrean heights. Since his predictions materialised he descended to where Vardhman was. He greeted him with hymns and renamed him as Mahavira or 'the truly brave.'

Compare this myth with its parallel from 'Bhagwat' :

Krishna and Balbhadra were engaged in child like frolics with other juvenile cowherds. They rode one another as one does a horse. A demon Pralamba, sent by king Kansa, mixed with them in the guise of a boy. He wanted to abduct Krishna and Balbhadra. He carried Balbhadra away over his shoulders, playing his equine role. He then appeared in his fearsome, diabolical aspect. However, Balbhadra was not to be scared. He hit the demon with his fist so that he vomitted out blood. He was then committed to death.[2]

---

1. 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. pp. 246-248.
2. 'Bhagwat', 10/20/18-30.

Both the incidents display the facility of the author's pen. To demonstrate Mahavira's valour the author conceived certain metaphors, the credibility of which hardly concerns the poet. However, his motive is true. Mahavira's dynamism was most superlative. This is what the poet meant to convey. It certainly is a truth.

A truthful perspective can put up with any exaggeration.

38

The Uncommon and the Common

That which commonly occurs is granted credence. That which occurs in a few lives only is not accepted by our rational faculty. We may accept it with a reservation as it is uncommon or may discard it altogether. However, the occurrences do take place irrespective of the fact whether we accept these or not.

To revert to Mahavira's life : He was in the foetus stage. He was enlightened even then. When six months of gestation had passed, the usual foetal movement suddenly ceased. Trishala was worried. Has the foetus lost its life? She was glum. A female friend of her said—

'I hope all is well, dear lady!'

'The child in the womb does not look well. How can I be happy in the circumstances?'

'Good God! How be it?'

'I tell you the facts as they are.'

'God help us lady. I am greatly worried.'

'How shall the wish-tree grow in a desert?'

Trishala was on the verge of tears. The lady with her could see the anguished looks of her. Every word of her was molten lava. The companion was also tormented. She got it conveyed to King Siddhartha. He was also worried. The news made very one tense and unhappy. The dramatic performances in the theatres were given up. The royal household was gloom-engulfed. The wheel of time seemed to be at stand-still.

Mahavira perceived these developments of the external world. How curious! Sometimes good intentions do not yield a happy outcome. He had stopped all movements to spare the pregnant mother discomfort. But the outcome was gross botheration to everybody. The common beings cannot stand uncommon events. Mahavira resumed his foetal movements. The mother was relieved. The royal family was reassured. The melodies of musical instruments again resounded. Mahavira was touched by the affection of his parents. He took a vow not to renounce householdership so long as his parents lived.[1] The worldly filal affection attained unworldly dimensions.

Abhimanyu had also learnt of the strategy of arranging the forces *(chakravyuha)* while he was a foetus. Such occurrences are likely to occur once a while. But their rarity renders such events rationally inexplicable. And still closer probe of foetal developments might someday reveal new facts to justify the seeming impossibilities.

---

[1] 'Kalpasutra', 87-91.

39

Omniscience : Its Two Aspects

We witness the bygone from either of the two angles—approbation and reprobation. Both angles render an individual comprehensible.

Lord Mahavira has been observed from both the angles. There has been none who projected himself in either manner only viz. exclusively commendably or reprehensibly. Jain works lionize him while Buddhist works explore lacuna in his career. Neither displays an objective attitude which both were supposed to maintain. Vedic literature omits to mention him in either manner. It is a big enigma for the historian why it is so.

Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha both fall in the *shramana* tradition. Notwithstanding their dissimilarities, they evince ample similarities. A perusal of the respective works of the two schools reveals a rivalry between them. Jain canonical literature steers clear of Lord Buddha's reprobation. Buddhistic canonical literature on the otherhand severely criticizes Mahavira, to the extent of casting aspersions. Buddha would not endorse such a conduct, a great spiritualist as he was. It is a sad communtary on the mentality of the authors themselves. Jain system had gathered momentum then and consequently they found it unnecessary to reprehend Buddhists. It is a psychological fact that it is the weak who resort to accusing the strong rather than otherwise.

Jain canonical literature finds Lord Mahavira as omniscient. He knew and saw all the creatures and their modes throughout the universe and its diverse planes. Buddhistic literature contemptuously dismisses these virtues of Mahavira.

Once Lord Buddha stayed at Kandalak in Venuvana, Rajgriha. One wandering monk Sakul Udai stayed at the abbey alongwith his group. Lord Buddha called on Sakul Udai in the forenoon. The latter requested him to preach. Buddha, on the other hand, insisted on Udai saying something. Said Udai 'Sire! The one claiming to master all knowledge and witness all occurrences, be he walking or standing or sleeping or waking, was befuddled on being interrogated. He began to fidget for the want of replies. He began to digress. He even showed anger, enmity and distrust. That drove me all the more to your Holiness, sir.'

'Who is it Udai who proclaims himself to be omniscient and was cornered by your questions?'

'Sire! He is Niggatha Natputta (Nirgrantha Natputra-Mahavira.)!

Jainism believes that once the obstructions to enlightenment are removed, one becomes omniscient and a witness to all occurrences. Mahavira never claimed this prerogative for himself. He pronounced that anybody who succeeded in this uncovering of the transcendental knowledge and vision was entitled to be an omniscient.

However, the anecdote is an indication of Mahavira's omniscience, being the common talk then.

Omniscience is inborn. The external eyes can't achieve this virtue. The disciples of Lord Parshwa also did not readily believe Lord Mahavira's omniscience. They would first make sure for themselves before they should subscribe to this view.

Once the Lord stayed at Dutipalash chaitya near Wanijyagram. Gangaiya, a disciple of Lord Parshwa visited him and put various questions to him. During the discussions the Lord said to him. 'Pioneer Parshwa had declared the universe to be perennial. That leads me to declare that the living beings are born by virtue of their perennial existence and the same perennial existance tends them when they don't exist.

To this monk Gangaiya said, 'Sire! Is it your native knowledge or one obtained from another source?'

'I know it inherently and not as heard from another.'

'How do you know it?'

'My lnowledge is unobstructed. Such a one with unobstructed enlightenment knows the finite and the infinite, both. Accordingly, all knowledge is my province. I cite Arhat Parshwa to prop your faith.'

The words of the Lord eradicated Gangaiya's doubt. He was convinced that the Lord was omniscient and a seer. On this being induced with faith he prayed to him and sought initiation into his path.[1]

It is not for the author to give a dictum on the question of Lord Mahavira's omniscience, since the author is far from an omniscient. How can one not omniscient make pronouncements on another's omniscience or otherwise? Sudharma was the Lord's *ganadhar* or cardinal monk. He attended on him. His chief disciple was Jambu. Certain *shramanas* and Brahmins visited him. Religious discussions ensued. Jambu commented on the essentials of non-violence. They were highly inspired. Said they, 'Sire! Who had enunciated the code of non-violence?'

'Lord Mahavira has done it.'

'Tell us more about his knowledge and wisdom. Your master must have revealed all this to you.'

'My master Sudharma told me that his knowledge and wisdom were infinite.'

The knowledge that is unobstructed is infinite. Such a revelation is omniscience. During the modern rational age omniscience is a knotty concept. Crystal-glass is by its nature utterly pure and serene. It should not surprise anybody. The consciousness of the self is accordingly pure and serene.

---

1. 'Bhagwai', 9/122-134.

There is nothing unusual in it. It appears as unusual to them whose knowledge is still obstructed and who have to rely on empirical knowledge only.

Wandering monk Skandaka was coming to meet Lord Mahavira. Gautam came forward to receive him and asked him, 'Skandaka! Is it true that Pingal Nirgrantha put you questions that were unanswerable by you? Is it on that account that you arrive here?'

Skandaka was taken aback. Said he, 'Tell me who is he that has divined this secret of mine. Who that intuitive genius happens to be?'

'Lord Mahavira revealed it to me. He is an enlightened *Arhat*. He is aware of the past, the present and the future. He is omniscient and a seer of all.'[1]

The Lord used to reveal such unsual secrets and events of the preceding incarnations not infrequently. However, these be not taken to be the proofs of his omniscience. His omniscience is testified by his consciousness being fully revealed.

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 2/36-38.

40

Mahavira in Buddhistic Literature

Buddhistic literature called *Pitakas* frequently mentions Lord Mahavira and his doctrines. These works invariably cast an unseemly light on him. It reveals the communal mentality and the standards of the courtesy of those days. One may ignore these unpleasant aspects. However, Buddhistic *Pitakas* retain certain previous bio-data of Lord Mahavira which none need ignore. They shed some new light on Lord Mahavira's conduct and principles. Lord Mahavira preferred knowledge to faith.

Niggantha Natputta (Mahavira) was at Machchhikasand, then, alongwith a large group of his followers.

The householder Chitta heard of his arrival there. Chitta called on him with certain other aspirants. He greeted the Lord and sat aside.

To thus humbly seated Chitta, Nigantha Natputta addressed himself :

'Householder! Do you believe that *shramana* Gautam experiences the unruffled meditation *par excellence?* Does he free himself totally of all thoughts?'

'Sire! I am not inclined to take for granted by dint of faith that the Lord experiences such *samadhi* (meditation *par excellence.*)'

Nigantha (Mahavira) addressed himself to the assembly and said, 'You see how innocent and plain-spoken householder Chitta is. To suppress all thought is no easier than to cage air in the net.'

'Sire! Which of the two is preferable—knowledge or faith?'

'Householder! Knowledge is greater than faith. Whenever I wish to, I first meditate and then proceed to a new place. My next choice is meditation. Still next is meditation and again meditation, before I move ahead.'

'Sire! I also feel accordingly. Shall I then resort to devote to a Brahmin or *shramana* to realize the thoughtless meditation and elimination of ideas?'

On this query of Chitta, Nigantha Natputta addressed himself to the assembly thus: 'See for yourself what a fool and knave this Chitta is!'

'But you were appreciating Chitta's innocence and truthfulness only a moment ago, sire! Now you call him a fool and a knave. If your initial observation is correct then the later one is a falsehood and *vice versa!*

Lord Mahavira was fully alive to the contemporary problems also. He prescribed mendicancy for the monks. The idea of saints being a burden to the householders was unpalatable to him.

Buddhist monks would take meals on being invited. Hence during the periods of famine they would pose a problem to the householders of the area. Asibandhakputra, a follower of Lord Mahavira, had hinted at such a situation:

Once Lord Buddha wandered through Kaushal and reached Nalanda, accompanied by a large group of monks. There he camped at Prawarik mango-grove.

Nalanda was famine-stricken. People were famished and reduced to skeletons. Corpses of starved human beings revealed white bones.

The village-chief Asibandhakputra, a follower of Nagputra, visited him and sat aside after greeting him.

Nagputra told him, 'Village chief! you go to monk Gautam and hold disputations with him. It will enhance your reputation.'

'Sire! Gautam, the monk, is a big figure. How shall I cope up with him in disputation?'

Village chief! Visit Gautam, the monk, and ask him—Whether the Lord upholds the ideal of promoting, conserving and cherishing the human families. If Gautam the monk, responds in the positive, you question him why the Lord moves about with such a large group of monks when the people are facing a blighting famine. Why does he thus attempt to exterminate families or at least blast them with added hardship? Such a double-edged question will bamboozle Gautam, the monk!'

Asibandhak expressed his consent and went to where Lord Buddha camped. He greeted the latter and sat aside unobtrusively. A little later he said, 'Sire! Does not the Lord commend the promotion of families, protecting and showing them compassion?'

'Yes, Village chief! he does!

'Why then, sire, the Lord moves along with a horde of monks while the people here are damned already with a devastating famine? Why does he choose to ruin them completely?'

Lord Mahavira enunciated the universe to be finite and the transcendental world to be infinite. Buddhistic literature testifies to it.

'Two Lokayatika Brahmins came to the Lord and asked after greeting him, 'Sire! Is Purankashyapa, an omniscient, a seer of all creation and a sage? He claims that he incessantly observes all knowledge and experiences all wisdom during all moments of life, be he standing, walking, sleeping or waking. He avers that he witnesses the infinite universe with his infinite knowledge. Sire! Nigantha Natputra asserts accordingly. He asserts that he observes all occurrences of the infinite universe by means of his infinite wisdom. Which of the two counter-assertions is true, Lord Gautam?'

41

The Visible Tendencies Through The Invisible Gauge

Lord Buddha spoke to Mahanam, 'Once I stayed at Gridhrakuta hill in Rajgriha. Numerous Nirgranthas, then, performed severe austerities by standing erect at Kalshila. In the evening, Mahanama, after performing my meditation, I went where the Nirgranthas performed their austerities at Kalshila. Said I to them, "Nirgranthas! May you live long! Why do you thus stand uncomfortably erect and do penances?" Said the Nirgaranthas, "May you live long sire! Nirgrantha Natputra (Mahavira) is omniscient and a seer. While walking or standing or sleeping or waking he witnesses all occurrences. He advises us to absolve ourselves of all the latencies by severe austerities. He suggests complete restraint of body, speech and mind. Such a penitence shall exhaust all the past *karmas* and stop the growth of new ones to result in purity of mind. Elimination of future karmic infection will result in exhaustion of *karmas.* Karmic exhaustion will yield eradication of unhappiness, pain and all trouble. We find the doctrine reasonable and acceptable."

Said the Nirgranthas, 'Gautam, sir! Pleasure does not yield pleasure. It is pain that yields pleasure.'

The excerpts from 'Majjhimnikaya' reveal that Lord Mahavira emphasised austerities and restraint. To empty the accumulated water of the pond and to stop all inlets of water alone assure the emptying of the pond.

Lord Mahavira deemed body, speech and mind, all the three, as the means of bondage. The remedy laid by him is threefold :

1. Bodily restraint—suppressing all movement of the body.
2. Oral restraint—Silence.
3. Mental restraint—Meditation.

The Lord never aimed at masochism. However, if the fulfilment of restraint caused incidental pain to the body, he would not recommend any device to obviate it. Sitting is more comfortable than standing and lying than sitting but the vortex created by meditation in the standing posture is higher than the one in sitting or lying.

It is the mind that steers the body and the speech. Hence Lord Buddha held mind to be the cause of bondage and liberation.

'It is from 'Majjhimnikaya' :

'Nirgrantha Natputra camped at Nalanda, then, with his large number of followers. Nirgrantha Dirghatapasvi begged his food and took it at Nalanda. He then, visited Pravarika mango-grove where the Lord stayed. He accosted him to know of his welfare and stood aside.

Said the Lord 'Austere gentleman, you may sit down as there are places to sit.' The austere took his seat.

Said the Lord, 'Austere gentleman! How many *karmas* does *Nirgrantha* Natputra suggest for eradication of vicious deserts?'

'May you live long Gautam! Nirgrantha Natputra does not believe in prescribing *Karmas.* He suggests only the causes that lead to *Karmas.*

'Then how many kinds of such causes are suggested by Nirgrantha Natputta for exhausting vicious *Karmas?*'

'Gautam, sir! Nirgrantha Natputta prescribes threefold causes for elimination of vicious deeds :—

'The bodily cause, the vocal cause and the mental cause.'

'Is it so that the bodily cause, the vocal cause and the mental cause are different from one another?'

'Yes sir, physical cause, vocal cause and mental cause differ from one another.'

'Austere gentleman! Tell me which of the three kinds of causes is the most far-reaching in provoking one towards sins.

'May you live long, sire! It is the physical cause that goes a long way to prompt one to commit sins: not so the vocal and the mental one.'

'Pray tell me Gautam, sir, how many kinds of causes you prescribe for the eradication of sins.'

'Tathagata (Buddha) does not believe in prescribing the causes for the elimination of all sinful tendencies. He believes in prescribing *Karmas* (deeds) for the purpose.'

'Then tell me Gautam, sir, how many deeds do you prescribe.'

'Three kinds of deeds: physical deed, vocal deed and mental deed.'

'Does it mean Gautam that physical activity, vocal activity and mental activity differ from one another?'

'Yes, austere gentleman, physical, oral and mental acts differ from one another.'

'Then worthy Gautam! Which of the three deeds is most effective in adding to the sinful tendency?'

'I hold mental activity to be the most sinful of all the kinds of activities.'

The great austere left his seat and went where Nirgrantha Natputta was. Nirgrantha Natputta was engaged with a large group of householders, Upali etc. from Balaks (Lonkar). Nirgrantha Natputra asked Dirghatapasvi before he had reached him :

'Wherefrom austere gentleman, at this hour of afternoon?'

'I come from monk Gautam, sire.'

'Did you converse with him?'

'I did, Sire!'

'Pray tell me all that transpired between you and him.'

Upon this Dirghatapasvi Nirgrantha, narrated to him verbatim the discussion that had been held between them.

'Bleesed be ye austere fellow! The outmoded mental penitence, as depicted by the well-read householder Nirgrantha Dirghatapasvi before *shramana* Gautam, is nothing before the supreme physical penitence. It is the physical penitence that is supremely responsible for conducing to sin and not oral and mental penitence!'[1]

Lord Mahavira was the propounder of non-exclusive perspective. He would not reckon a fact exclusively. Body is the seat of tendencies. Hence physical deed may be the root of all evil. Mind also prompts one to act, hence it may also be responsible for the evil. The touchstone of good and evil tendencies is mind alone.

Lord Mahavira was then at Rajgriha. King Shrenik went to him to pay respects. He saw the monk and erstwhile king Prasannachandra and was filled with admiration. He bowed to the meditating Prasannachandra and moved onwards. On approaching to the Lord he said, 'Sire! on way I saw Prasannachandra. His mode of meditation is truly impressive. He was fully absorbed in meditation. If he dies in this state he is sure to win liberation. Am I correct, sire?'

'No.'

'Why, sire?'

'You have seen the body only. *Samadhi* is measured by another criterion.'

'What shall be his destiny, then?'

'Hell.'

'Hell?'

'Yes, hell.'

'How be it, sire?'

'The body does not travel alone to the hell. That which can suffer internal perdition is even now on way to hell.'

'I am confused, sire. Pray solve my riddle.'

---

[1] 'Majjhimnikaya, Upalisuttam', 6/1-21.

Said the Lord, 'Two warriors Sumukha and Durmukha were moving ahead of you. They saw the monk standing without support in the sky on one foot. He was staring at the sun. Said Sumukha, "What a great austerity!"

'Said Durmukha, "It's no austerity. He has ruined himself. He is king Prasannachandra of Potanpur. He has entrusted the state to his young son as does a cruel cartman harness a young calf to a heavy cart. The child can hardly bear the burden. His counsels have conspired with king Dadhiwahan to usurp the kingdom. It is no *dharma.* It is no austerity." '

'The two moved on conversing.'

'The monk was distracted by the conversation. He said to himself—"I have ever supported and partonised my ministers. They have betrayed me. They have been lured by power. How urgrateful man is? He awaits the least opportunity to usurp another's right. I shall set them right for their misdeeds."

'The ex-king-monk flew on the wings of fancy to Potanpur and began to fire the counsels for their treason. The body stood erect in meditation, while the mind fought battles in the arena of Potanpur.'

Said the king, How very strange, sire! How our eyes are duped! We fail to divine the mind that hides within the body. Sire, is the ex-king-monk still progressing towards hellish damnation or receding therefrom?'

'He has receded from the infernal fate.'

'Towards which direction?'

'Towards liberation.'

'How was it, sire?'

'The high-water mark of our excitenment augurs a benefice move. The monk had had enough of his fanciful fights. Then he crashed upon the existing plane of reality. He saw that there was no kingdom, no monarch, no ministerial plot. It was all a creation of words. He had been soaring high in the sky of fancy. Now he is fully conscious of reality and hence he moves ahead towards liberation!'

Before the king would comprehend the implication of the Lord's words. the latter announced, 'Shrenik! The ex-king-monk is fully enlightened now!'

The ex-king-monk's posture indicates how little the body counts before the mind. The body in meditating posture has to carry the burden of sin because of its inherent debility. If body were the sole criterion of the true and untrue, a man standing in meditation could not have proceeded towards inferno.

42

The Probing Eye : Divining the Invisible

The time-bound universe withnesses the past, the present and the future. Indian philosophy attempted, in its infancy to comprehend, Time. This probe heralded an attempt at reconciliation also. Various synchronous events bear an invisible interconnection. There is another category of events that occur one after the other. Still another variety has a causal relation.

Each individual is endowed with a number of virtues. The manifested virtues are known to us while the unmanifested ones elude us. We value an individual on the basis of his manifested virtues. Hence our evaluation is valid for the present only. As another mode manifests itself, the earlier valuation loses its validity. Mahavira's approach in this context was different from the one we ordinarily adopt. He was as much alive to the latencies of an individual as to his patent virtues. The past and the future would be as obvious to him as the present.

Once it was raining heavily. Kumar Shraman Atimuktaka was going to relieve himself. He carried a jar with himself. He came across a stream of water. He barred the stream with an earthen bound. He floated his jar in the water and began to play shouting—'My boat is floating across, 'a child as he was.

Certain monks passed by him. They saw the puerile sport. They came to Lord Mahavira forthwith. After greeting the

Lord they contemptuously said, 'Sire! Kumar Shramana Atimuktaka happens to be your disciple. When will he be delivered? How many times will he be incarnated before being liberated?'

Said the Lord, 'Kumar Shramana Atimuktaka shall be delivered during this very incarnation. Treat him not with scorn, but extend to him all help and co-operation. His potentialities are on the verge of their manifestation and full evolution. Take him not casually.'

They all grew serious at this prediction. They were aware of the obvious only and not of the under-current eluding their eyes. Hence the lax moment of Atimuktaka's led them to their outburst calmed by the forecast of the coming events.

Atimuktaka was initiated when he was very young. One may be initiated during childhood or youth or old age, as ordained by the Lord.

Lord Mahavira camped at Poulaspur, then. Monk Gautam went out for begging meals. Near in the playground some children were playing. Prince Atimuktaka of Poulaspur was also among them. He saw Gautam. Out of curiosity he asked Gautam, 'who do you happen to be?'

'I am a monk.'

'Why do you wander here and there?'

'I go to the town for begging food.'

'Please accompany me. I will offer you meals' Saying this Atimuktaka held Gautam's finger and led him to his father's palace. His mother Shridevi offered him food. When Gautam began to leave Atimuktaka asked him.

'Where do you reside, sire?'

'With my preceptor.'

'Who is he?'

'Lord Mahavira, the monk.'

'Where shall we find him?'

'Near by, in Shrivana garden.'

'I wish to see him.'

'As you choose.'

Kumar Atimuktaka visited the Lord alongwith Gautam. He greeted the Lord and heard him preaching. He felt disinclined to return home. He begged to be initiated. The prayer was granted subject to his obtaining the parental consent. Atimuktaka left for obtaining filial consent. He greeted them and said,' I come from Lord Mahavira.'

'Good of you, Kumar.'

'Mother! I liked him much.'

'He is really good, child. One likes him on that account.'

'I crave, mother, to live with him.'

'Son! The Lord does not reside in houses. We are, on the other hand, householders. We cannot reside with him.'

'Mother! I wish to become a houseless monk and stay with him.'

'You are a child, son. Your mind is still immature. Can you follow the spiritual doctrines?'

'Mother! That which I know, I know not. That which I know not, I know.'

'How is it son that what you know you know not and what you know not, you know?'

'Mother! I know that whoever is born is destined to die. But I don't know where, when and how this destiny will fulfil itself.

"I have still to learn what deeds enable the *tiryancha* (animal) to attain human, infernal or divine planes of existence.

'Mother! I do not know what I know and what I know not. But I am keen to learn these intricacies. Pray, permit me to submit myself to His Holiness.'

The parents realised that higher wisdom had dawned upon him. Never in the past had he shown interest in such spiritual riddles. His sentiments and awareness cast a spell over them. They were constrained to allow him to be initiated. Kumar was initiated by the Lord. His curiosities were satisfied. The foresight of the Lord detected his potentialities to be developed in due course.[1]

---

1. 'Antgadadasao', 6/71-96.

43

The Co-travellers and the Odyssey

Lord Mahavira's odyssey was for the infinite. Hence he tackled those issues only which pertain to be infinite. The subjects of topical interest he let go. His subject was neither sociology nor statecraft. He came like a traveller who moves ahead till the goal is reached. When the journey was launched he was alone. Thanks to the achievements on way that thousands clustered around him. Fourteen thousand monks and thirty-six thousand nuns along with a lac and fifty-nine thousand male and three lac and eighteen-thousand female devotees followed him. To boot, many more followers were there. But the numbers recorded here represent those who were his co-travellers and who had taken partial or complete vows. The vistas of inner knowledge were opened up by the Lord. He inspired all with self-confidence. Numerous aspirants attained their aims and moved ahead. Thirteen hundred of his monks were *Pratyakshagnani (Awadhi gnani)* with intuitive and transcendental knowledge. Seven hundred monks and the fourteen hundred nuns attained enlightenment. Each day the journey attained new heights of glory.

His co-travellers along the journey of the infinite hailed from different regions, different castes, communities and situations.

1. Jindeo was a trader of Saket. He travelled along to Kotivarsha. Its ruler was Kirat (Chilat). Jindeo* presented to him precious jewels. Kirat enquired of him where such gems

---

* The seers.

were found. Jindeo told him that the jewels were found in his native country. Kirat showed an inclination to visit Kaushal. Jindeo in consultation with his own ruler extended an invitation to Kirat to visit Kaushal. He accompanied Jindeo to Saket. King Shatrunjaya received him with a fanfare.

Lord Mahavira reached Saket. Thousands of people came to see the Lord when they learnt of his holy visit. Shatrunjaya also came to see him. Seeing large crowds, Kirat asked Jindeo the cause of such hullabaloo.

Said Jindeo, 'A trader in jewels has arrived. These people go to see him.'

'Let's also go to see him.'

Kirat and Jindeo both went to the Lord.

Kirat said, 'I have heard, sire, that you own many jewels!'

'You have heard rightly.'

'Pray let me witness your jewels.

'Are you sincere about it?'

'Why should I not be sincere?'

'Are you keen on seeing the jewels?'

'I am, if you are pleased to show me.'

'Then who am I to show you? You yourself own the jewels.'

'How do I own these?'

'You do have if you grow aware of these.'

'Pray guide me. I am most curious to see these.'

'You have been an extrovert. Please see inside and probe deeper and deeper.'

Kirat launched upon his inward journey. He was concentrating within himself. He had never seen such dazzling brilliance of jewels. Ultimately he transcended the parametres of light where from one never reverts to darkness. He became the perennial co-traveller of Mahavira.[1]

2. In the southern region of Arabia lay the province of Ardra. The ruler of the place was Ardraka. Ardrakumar was

---

[1] 'Awashyakchurni', II pt. pp. 203, 204.

his prince. Once king Shrenik sent a present to king Ardraka. Ardrakumar was present when the gift was being sent. It occurred to him that if Ardraka was a friend to his father's the former's son should be his friend. He enquired of the emissary the name of Ardraka's son. He revealed to him the name of Abhayakumar. Ardrakumar sent a gift to abhayakumar, which the latter was pleased to accept. It made the two close friends. In return Abhayakumar sent some utensils used by monks. Seeing these Ardrakumar could recollect his last incarnation. He found an opportunity to emigrate. The tempests of desire and jungles of thoughts were left far behind and he was now a co-traveller of the Lord in his odyssey.[1]

3. The father of Varishena was Shrenik and mother Chellana. He was religiously inclined. It was the fourteenth day of the moon. He went to the cremation ground and began to meditate there.

Vidyuta, a professional robber lived at Rajgriha. He was in love with the chief courtesan of the city. The courtesan asked him one day, 'Do you have a true love for me?'

'What made you doubt my love?'

'Once a while one is prone to be caught in the muddle of doubt. I am no exception.'

'Shall I give you the proof of my love?'

'You ought to.'

'I submit myself to the test. What offer do you seek from me?'

'Procure for me queen Chellana's necklace.'

'Do you seriously desire such a gift?'

'I do.'

'But is it humanly possible?'

'Love deserves the highest sacrifice including that of one's life. Is it not?'

'You wish me to be a martyr like a moth for the flame.'

'What leads you to make such an observation ?'

---

[1] 'Suyagodo' 2/6 Vrithi leaf 137-139.

'Anyway, the necklace of Chellana shall be worn round your neck in no time.'

Vidyuta was a resourceful robber who could delude an equally practical, alert and clever premier like Abhayakumar. He entered the seraglio in desguise. He pilfered the necklace and sneaked out. However, the chief of the police could see him. He asked spontaneously,

'What is it that you carry Vidyuta?'

'Nothing, sir.'

'You do carry something.'

'Who is it that has informed you?'

'Your unusually heavy footsteps cause me suspicion.'

'Rest assured, sir. It is nothing.'

Thus reassuring the police officer, Vidyuta moved off. In no time the police-stations were alerted about the palace robbery. The thief was to be arrested promptly.

The chief of the police-station chased Vidyuta with his force. The robber had learnt of this alarm and chase. He rushed to the cremation ground. Varishena was meditaing there. The robber left the necklace near him and ran away.

The police reached the cremation ground in hot pursuit of the robber. Finding the jewels near the saint the police officer took him to be a swindler, his saintly impresonation being a ruse to conceal his crime. He was arrested and produced before the king. The king saw that his own son Varishena was produced as a robber. How could he steal his own mother's jewels? It was impossible. However, the police was convinced of his criminal act. The circumstancial evidence led to no other inference. How to adjudicate in such circumstances? To defer to the filial affection or pronounce the severest sentence? The call of duty prevailed upon his conscience and he awarded the princely accused the capital sentence, of course, with a heavy heart. The executioner took him to the cremation ground.

Varishena had practised meditation as Mahavira had done in the cremation ground. He was not afraid a bit. He was as camplacent while being taken to be executed as he was on the eve of his arrest. His meditation was as unbroken as ever. Seeing him so non-chalant, the executioner was at his wit's end. He could not gather courage to raise his sword-bearing hand to behead the prince. Another executioner was also an equal failure and yet another one. Shrenik was informed of it. He came to the spot.

He said, 'I was confident, son, that you are not a robber. I know your spiritual creed. But the claims of justice compelled me to hold otherwise. Justice is blind and the evidence available inculpated you without doubt. But truth is invincible as Mahavira has pronounced. This doctrine has immortalised you. Every inhabitant of Rajgriha proclaims your nobility. Forgive me for passing such a stringent judgment. It has immortalised you, albeit, when you were on the verge of death. Pray accompany me home.'

'Please leave me where I am. I have no mind to accompany you.'

'Where do you propose to go herefrom?'

'To my home.'

'Is not the palace of Rajgriha your own home?'

'It is far from being so.'

'Since when is it so?'

'I was engaged in meditation in the cremation ground. I was indicted of theft. You convicted me of the offence. I had resolved to surrender myself to Lord Mahavira in case I was acquitted of the charge. Hence I abondon all claims of mine over my earlier home of Rajgriha.'

'You propose to renounce your parents as well.'

'I do. Truth is blind and deaf like justice. By means of truth I observe the self as the mother and again the self as the father.'

'The great issue of your wife is also involved in it.'

'If the executioner had killed me what would happen to her?'

'It would have been the will of the Providence.'

'Call it then the will of Truth.'

Shrenik had no word to utter. All were mute like him. Varishena was drawn towards the Lord.

4. It was the hayday of Rajgriha. Moral and material progress distinguished it far and wide. Lord Mahavira often camped there. He had passed fourteen of his rainy seasons there. Hundreds of his disciple-monks practised meditation in the caves of vaibhagiri mountain. The jungle of the range drew various monks to practise religion there undisturbed. Another practice was also being pursued in the caves and jungles around. The robbers and dacoits who were a menace to the townmen of Rajgriha sought refuge there. The Lord had rightly said that the means of spiritual progress can as well become the means of moral decline. Conversely, the means of moral decline may as well serve to promote spiritualism. The forest caves that served to shelter the monks engaged in spiritual pursuit also served to harbour the decoits engaged in moral descent.

A robber, Lohakhuro, lived in a cave of Vaibhagiri. Rohini was his wife. Rohineya was his son. Lohakhuro was a ruthless robber. The rich of Rajgriha was mortally afraid of him, a heartless rogue as he was. He was an atheist. He had an abhorrence for religion and religious teachers. For years together he had terrified the town of Rajgriha : now death terrified him. He was breathing his last. He said to Rohineya, 'Please listen to my last advice and follow it all your life.'

Rohineya grew serious.

Said Lohakhuro, 'You must have heard of the fame of the monk Mahavira who lives at Rajgriha.'

'I have heard of him father. He yields a vast influence. The entire town of Rajgriha worships him.'

'Son! He is our greatest enemy.'

'How is it father?'

'Once a few of my associates went to see him. When they returned they were no more robbers. Shrenik is our minor enemy. He can barely imprison a thief rather than wean him from thievery. Mahavira can eradicate the thievish tendency altogether. His is a systematic attempt to exterminate our ancestral vocation. Hence I exhort you to shun his company. Never so much as go near him, nor listen to him for a moment.'

Rohineya took his departing father's counsel to heart. Lohakhuro died a happy death at this solemn assurance of his worthy son. As ruthless was his swansong as had been his life on earth.

Rohineya outdid his father in cruelty. He mastered the craft and began to thrive at the expense of Rajgriha. On one side Mahavira preached non-acquisition, non-thieving and fearlessness, on the other side premier Abhayakumar tried new strategies to outwit robbers. And still the inhabitants of Rajgriha were having a hard time at the hands of the wily robber. Wealthy people were being looted in day out. The police helplessly roamed about in search of the culprits with no results worth any name.

Robber Rohineya possessed sandals that enabled him to fly and knew how to disguise himself successfully. He would appear before the police to tease them and before they could arrest him, either he would assume another disguise or fly away. The king, the ministers, the police and the townmen were at the end of their tether. One man Rohineya was enough to ruin their peace.

It was the day-time. Rohineya broke into an uninhabited house. He attempted to break open the safe. The neighbours were alarmed. They assembled there. Rohineya heard the noise. He fled away. In his scramble for safety he forgot his miraculous sandals. Beside his path was the place where Lord Mahavira preached. He wanted to avoid listening to him. A seasoned thief would not like to listen to a regular campaigner against the vocation of theft. Compliance of his father's last command was also a factor. As he approached the pulpit, he plugged his ears with his fingers and accelerated his pace. But destiny had it otherwise. His right foot was pricked with a sharp thorn. He could not move any farther.

He feared he was being pursued. To remove the thorn was an urgent necessity. Unencumbering the hands for it would expose him to hear the preaching of the Lord. He stayed to decide for a moment. The danger from the pursuers posed a graver threat. He freed his fingers from the ears to remove the thorn. The Lord was, then, describing the gods who stare with an unwinking gaze and hover four-finger-width above the ground. He could not help imbibing these words. Having removed his thorn he replugged his ears. Trying to disabuse himself of the already heard words he rushed onwards. That which we try to erase from our memory gets grounded into it ineradicably. Rohineya could not forget those unforgettable words. The words haunted him.

Rohineya became a nightmare to the citizens. The prominent among them went in a delegation to king Shrenik of Magadha, while he was in council. Fear, gravity and anger were writ large over their faces. The king enquired of their welfare. Said they, 'we had a happy time in your reign till Rohineya appeared on the scene, whose menace has ruined our peace.'

The king was flushed with anger. He summoned the police station officer and rebuked him. The latter had no explanation to offer but that the robber was inexorable and of his own kind. All efforts to stalk him had been futile. Unless the premier Abhayakumar came to his succour no redemption was possible.

Abhayakumar was entrusted with the task. He planned a secret move. All the four gates of the city were kept wide open during the night. The guards hid themselves in the turrets. Before the midnight, Rohineya entered the southern gate. No sooner had he entered than the guards held him fast without giving him a moment's respite to assume a disguise. Nor could be escape their clutches.

Next morning the chief guard produced the robber before the king. The king was greatly upset. Said he menacingly, 'Rohineya! You posed a threat to us and the quiet of the town.

In this town of the gentle souls you alone are truly wicked. The wheel now comes full circle. Tell me why I should not commit you to death.'

Said the detenu, 'what your majesty pronounce is just and true. The Rohineya who is truly the author of these misdeeds ought to be punished with death. But my Lord one who is not Rohineya hardly deserves such a severe treatment.'

The king and the councillers were speechless for a moment at this logic. Whispered they amongst themselves. 'Is he not Rohineya?' They were agog with suspense.

'Are you not, Rohineya?'

'Not at all.'

'Who are you then?'

'I am a trader from Shalgram.'

'Pray, tell your name.'

'Durgchand.'

'What do you deal in?'

'I am a jeweller.'

'Whither did you move during the night?'

'I arrived from my village. Since my arrival was so untimely the guards caught hold of me in suspicion.'

'Should I believe you?'

'You may enquire of the people who know.'

'The king eyed Abhayakumar who tacitly supported the king's move for further investigation. A spy was sent to verify the facts. The council was dispersed.

'Rohineya had a great influence on the inhabitants of Shalgram. He fulfilled all their needs. The village, in return, served him. They endorsed the claim of the robber. The spy conveyed it to the king who in his turn released Rohineya. Abhayakumar even sought his forgiveness and courted his friendship. They were friends to each other. Abhayakumar detained him for dinner. Rohineya consented to it. His trained servants served meals. Rohineya fainted during the meal. Attendents carried him and laid him on a bed in the palace. Within a few hours his intoxication was gone. He rose from his lethargy. It was like paradise. A few heavenly damsels appeared, greeted him and said, 'It is paradise. See the glory all round. You have been reincarnated in heaven. May we know the deeds that you performed in your last incarnation on earth? Did you commit theft and dacoity, assult and torture? Such deeds alone entitle one to a reincarnation in heaven.'

Rohineya was confused for a moment. He glanced around. He was aware of Mahavira's words. The so-called heavenly damsels were winking. Their feet touched the ground. They are aristocratic females and not angels, he said. It was all a part of Abhayakumar's chicanery. He could size up the situation. Said he, 'I am Durgchand. I have still not passed away from my bodily abode. Don't attempt to befuddle me.' The spy reported the events to Abhayakumar who read in it his utter failure and sent Rohineya honourably towards his alleged place Shalgram.

But Rohineya had a conversion of heart. Thought he—A sentence uttered by Mahavira rescued me. My father unwisely advised me to insulate myself from all utterances by him. I should seek his proximity and attend his preachings.

Lord Mahavira was engaged in preaching to Shrenik, Abhayakumar and other dignitaries were present there. When he reached there Rohineya took place near by. The Lord elucidated non-violence thus :

'Happiness is a spontaneous experience of the self. Sensual pleasure is a mere spark of this very happiness. But to usurp another's happiness for selfish ends is a prelude to an interminable chain of unhappiness. Whoever thus deprives another of his share of pleasure denies himself the appreciation of this truth.

A man loved birds. He kept many such birds in cages. He had never perceived the pain of denial of liberty. It so happened that he was ensnared in a plot. The police held him. He himself was now confined who used to keep others confined. It was only now that he suffered the experience of detention. He sent a word to his family to release all the birds as the painful experience revealed to him how wretched an affliction it was.

The word of the Lord drew home to Rohineya the perennial verities. The vice of violence was too tangible to be ignored. He stood up and said, 'Sire! I hereby abandon all violence. Non-violence shall henceforth be my mode of life. Pray grace my vow.'

Shrenik said to Abhayakumar. 'He seems to be the same man whom our sepoys had arrested. He should be a virtuous individual. Pity that our officers thus humiliated a bird's soul.'

Before the king would complete his statement the revelation of the identity of the man stunned the gathering :

'I am Rohineya. Robbery is my ancentral vocation. I had terrorized the royal palace. I stole goods worth millions and billions. The entire machinery of Magadha failed to catch me inspite of their frantic efforts. It was the Lord who caught me today. Violence could not touch me but non-violence has held me firmly.'

Averting to Shrenik he said, 'Your majesty! Pray let your premier recover the loot in my possession and restore it to the lawful claimants. What does your majesty think of this humble citizen now?'

'Tell me what you think of your own self,' said the king.

Rohineya simply said, 'I have decided to seek initiation from the Lord.'

Shrenik joined a thousand voices to shout 'Bravo, bravo.' Fearlessness prevailed upon fear, trust upon suspicion, non-violence upon violence. Rajgriha heaved a sigh of relief.

Rajgriha inhabitants were restored of their wealth and Rohineya his own true wealth. Both were benefitted although in different manners. The robber that dwelt in Rohineya was dead. He was replaced by a saint. A major robber when canonised is never a minor saint. He cultivated sainthood till he breathed his last with all his might.'

5. Nepal was famous during those days for her jewel-studded shawls. Certain traders went to Rajgriha with these delicate fabrics. They introduced themselves and their commodities respectfully to king Shrenik. Each shawl cost one and a quarter lac of gold coins. The king was unwilling to buy the shawls. The traders were disappointed. They had pinned high hopes on the famed generosity of the king of Magadha. Instead of buying their entire stock of wares he had refused to buy a single piece. They came out of the palace with long faces. They even commented in derogatory terms on the low norms of Magadha and Rajgriha while leaving the royal premises.

A trader named Gobhadra lived at Rajgriha. Bhadra was his wife and Shalibhadra his son. Bhadra was now a widow and the head of the household. At the moment she sat in the balcony. The traders passed under her balcony. Bhadra overheard their low opinion about Magadha and Rajgriha. She felt maligned when such sentiments were expressed for her state and her town. She called the traders and asked them why they had made such a contempt for her place. The traders narrated to her their hopes belied by the miserly king.

Bhadra consoled them and bought all of their shawls. The traders left lauding the great tradition of Magadha.

Next day queen Chellana expressed her desire to the king to summon the traders to buy a shawl. They informed him that the stock had been exhausted. 'Who could buy all the shawls,' he asked.

'One person has purchased all of our shawls.'

'Who could afford it?'

'There is no paucity of aristocrats at Magadha.'

'Let me know the person's name, anyway.'

'A woman has purchased our shawls. Her name is Bhadra.'

The king sent his emissary to obtain by some means a shawl from Bhadra.

Said Bhadra, 'I had given the shawls to my daughters-in-law who used these as rags to clean their heels before throwing away the stuff.'

The emissary's report was an eye-opener to the king. He desired to see Shalibhadra. Bhadra invited the royal guest to her home.

The king visited the widow's place. The lavish display of wealth was astonishing. Bhadra asked her son Shalibhadra to receive the royal visitor downstairs. He did not know what a king is. He had ever lived in his ivory tower. He showed an indifference to the proposal taking 'king' to be a commodity. 'You may buy it, ' he said.

'King is no commodity, my boy. He is the emperor of Magadha and our master.'

Learning of a 'Master' palled his conceit of being supreme and free. He willy nilly went to greet the king who offered him a seat and affectionately talked to him. The boy was taciturn and glum. On his mother's request the king dismissed him immediately. The boy was not only melancholic, he showed neurotic symptons like perspiration. That his freedom was a myth was a great disillusionment to him.

Shalibhadra was a delicate, sophisticated being with all luxuries for the asking. This fad for liberty was his life-breath. It was the mainspring of his existence. A shock to this cherished notion was a jolt to him. He once again craved for his dream of freedom that had been shattered. Palatial houses could not provide him with freedom, it was obvious. Abandonment of luxurious living still offered some hope. Mahavira had advised such an abandoument of palatial buildings to the votaries of freedom. Shalibhadra decided to renounce his household.

Bhadra was shocked to learn it. She tried hard to dissuade her son but in vain. At last she requested him to renounce a wife a day. Since he had thirty-two wives he could be detained for at least thirty-two days. He bowed to his mother's desire.

Sister of Shalibhadra was Sundari whose husband was named Dhanya. Dhanya saw Sunder's tear-brimed eyes. On asking the cause she revealed to him that each day her brother renounced one of his wives. The thought had wrung tears out of her eyes.

'But he is a coward,' he said. 'If he had to turn an ascetic why should he do so in phases?'

'It is easier said than done,' said Sundari.

'Shall I take the test?' saying this he renounced all of his eight wives.

Shalibhadra and Dhanya, both got initiated with the Lord.[1]

---

[1] 'Trishashtishalakapurushocharitra' 10/10/57-148.

44

The Schism in the Order

At Kshatriya Kundgram a Kshatriya Youth named Jamali lived. He saw one day the residents of Kshatriyakund moving towards Brahminkund. He called his attendent and asked the reason for it. The attendant said, 'Lord Mahavira has come to grace Kshatriyakund. Our villagefolk go to court his blessings.'

Jamali also felt curious. He went to call on the Lord with his family. The preachings of the Lord enlightened him. He said, 'Sire! Your preachings have evoked a great devotion in me. True is your utterance, Lord, *sans* doubt. I long to realize myself. Pray let me be a monk. .'

The Lord agreed to it seeing him keenly intent. A votary of freedom as he was, he never coerced anybody. 'As you please' was his stock-phrase. This is how he consented to Jamali's resolve to be a monk. Jamali pursuaded his parents and wives to accord their sanction. Five-hundred other youths of Kshatriya (warrior) community joined him as ascetics. He was truly austere, having studied and practised the eleven scriptures *(angas)* and performed the severe penances to become a great ascetic.

Once Jamali came to the Lord. He said, 'Sire! I wish to wander along the region with five-hundred other monks. Pray permit me to do so!'

The Lord forsook to speak. Jamali repeated his request.

Still the Lord was quiet. Jamali set upon his journey without waiting for the Lord's consent.

Wandering alone, Jamali and his five-hundred co-travellers reached Shravasti. There he stayed at Kaushthak Chaitya. Illnutritive and irregular meals caused him bilious fever. He suffered a burning sensation all over his body. He asked the monks to spread his bed. While they were preparing his bed, he was suffering immense discomfort. He managed to speak out with great effort. 'Have you prepared my bed?' Said the monks. 'Sire! We have still not prepared it but it is in the process of being prepared.' This reply set a train of thought in his mind. 'Lord Mahavira calls the action on the verge of being done as done. But the principle hardly stands the test of pragmatism. I can see for myself that the bed-laying in progress is not a bed laid. If it were otherwise I could have lain on it.'

Jamali summoned the monks and confided his logical interpretation to them. Some of the monks conceded his point while others disagreed with him. Jamali abandoned the Lord's order and began to move about freely. Some of his disciples accompanied him while others rededicated themselves to the Lord.

Jamali recovered from his malady. He left Shravasti for Champa. Lord Mahavira stayed at Purnabhadra Chaitya. Jamali called on the Lord. He stood before him and said, 'Many of your disciples are unenlightened and move about accordingly. I am not unenlightened in my conduct. I am enlightened and conduct myself accordingly.'

The chief of the monks Gautam on hearing this bragging of Jamali said, 'Jamali! The vision of an enlightened being is not subject to physical obstructions like a hill, column or tower. If you are enlightened with a direct vision you reply to my twin query:

1. The universe is perennial or limited.
2. Individual self is perennial or limited.

Jamali's mind put out its tentacles to grasp the motive and purport of Gautam. Finding it enigmatic he forewent to speak.

The Lord addressed himself to Jamali, 'Jamali! There are disciples in my fold who are not enlightened and still can solve these questions. And never do they vainly claim to be enlightened like you.

'Jamali! The universe is perennial. There never was a time when it was not. Nor is it so that it does not exist now. And there shall never be a time when the universe will not exist. Hence I call it everlasting.

'However, the universe passes through various phases and hence, Jamali! I call it striated with limiting phases.

'Jamali. There never was a time, nor is, nor shall be when the individual self is bereft of it's existence. Hence I pronounce the individual self to be perennial.

'However, Jamali, the self is sometimes a man, at other times lower animal or god or internal being. As the self admit of evolutionary specific changes, I call it limited in span.

'Jamali! You are ignorant of logic and hence it is beyond you to specify whether the universe and the self are perennial or limited in span.

'Jamali! You are ignorant of logic and hence you are confused regarding the action on the verge of being done.

'Listen to the twin doctrines of logic I enunciate :

1. Absolute perspective.
2. Relative perspective.

'I have propounded the doctrine of action in progress from an absolute perspective. From this stance the time of occurrence and its conclusion coincide. Each action must accomplish something. If nothing be accomplished during the process how would it be accomplished when the action is completed? If the first fibre of the fabric is not a fabric how can its last fibre be a fabric? When the last fibre is made one says that the fabric is made. It is common parlance, a relative view. From an absolute angle of vision the fabric was being made with each fibre of it. Had not the first fibre seen the manufacture of the fabric, how would it be made with the last fibre?'

The Lord analysed the epistemological issue at great lenght but Jamali refused to budge from his dogmatic standpoint. He abandoned the Lord and continued to disseminate his own philosophy.[1] It was in the fourteenth year of Mahavira's attaining enlightenment.[2] It synchronised with the fourteenth year of the founding of the order. For full thirteen years there was no schism of any kind. The fourteenth year saw the beginning of schisms. But, thanks to the dignity of the Lord, Jamali's serious attempts at factionalism made no considerable dent in the order.

Priyadarshna was Jamali's wife. She had been initiated by the Lord alongwith her husband. She led a group of nuns. She supported Jamali and abandoned the Lord's order. Once she reached Shravasti with her nuns. She stayed in the receptacle store of Dhanka, the potter who lived there. He was a follower of Lord Mahavira and was well-grounded in philosophy. He once shot a fiery arrow at Priyadarshana's wrapping which immediately caught fire. Flurried, she said, 'Why gentlemen! What an indiscretion! My mantle is burnt.'

Said he, 'The cloth is not burnt. It is in the process of burning. A *la mode* Jamali we can say that the mantle is burnt when it is reduced to ashes. Your mantle is only progressing towards burning. Why should you call it burnt?'

The logic of Dhanka came home to Priyadarshna, the nun. She was reconverted to the Lord's fold alongwith her group of nuns.[3]

---

[1] 'Bhagwai', 9/156-234. 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. pp. 416-419.

[2] 'Awashyakchurni', I pt. p. 419.

[3] 'Awashyakchurni' I pt. p. 418.

45

The Thunderbolt of Violence against Non-violence

Lord Mahavira stayed at Kaushthak chaitya in Shravasti. His principle disciple Gautam went inside the town for begging food. He learnt that Gaushalak claimed to be *Jina (tirthankar)*.

When Gautam returned to the Lord he said, 'I have heard in Shravasti today that Gaushalak calls himself a *Jina.* Is it correct, sire? Pray, let me know his antecedents.'

Said the Lord, 'Gaushalak's father was Mankhali and mother Bhadra. I was spending my second rains in the weaving-shed outside Nalanda. Gaushalak also came down to stay there. I had observed fast for a month. I visited Vijaya's house for my first meal. He offered me food most courteously. This mode of offering meals was applauded by the townmen.

Gaushalak also came to know of it. He got interested in me. He said, 'You are my preceptor. Accept me as your disciple, sir?' I refused to accept him.

'The second month-long fast was broken by me at householder Ananda's place and the third month-long fast at Sunanda's place. To break my fourth month-long fast I went to the neighbouring place called Kollag from Nalanda. A Brahmin named Bahul lived there. He offered me meals. Gaushalak located me where I was on the outskirts of Kollag. We met at Panyabhumi. He said to me, 'you are my preceptor;

I am your disciple. Accept me as your disciple, sir! This time I accepted him. We began to live together. We thus lived together for six years before we parted our ways.

Whatever Gautam had heard of the Lord, he broke to some people. The report travelled on to reach Gaushalak himself. He was annoyed at it.

Once the Lord's disciple Ananda was going to Shravasti for begging meals. Gaushalak saw him going. He summoned him and said, 'Ananda! Please listen carefully to a fable!.

Ananda came near him to listen to him. Said Gaushalak—

'It's an ancient tale. Certain traders were going to a remote place with their wares. There was forest in the way. They had taken their meals before entering the forest. Soon their stock of water was exhausted. There was neither a village nor a pond nearby. They explored all around in search of water as they were dying of thirst. They came across four burrows. They excavated the first to find cold and crystal clear water. The traders drank to their fill and collected water in their pitchers. Some of them advised to dig the other three burrows also. Since the first yielded erystal-clear water the other one could yield gold. His conjecture was found to be correct. The second burrow disclosed gold. Now they grew a varicious. They felt tempted to dig the third burrow and found a stock of gems in it. Now their temptation was truly irresistible. They conferred amongst themselves that if the first yielded water, the second gold, and the third gems there was every likelihood of the fourth revealing still more precious articles. One of them was a seasoned and sincere trader. He said, "We have had fair rewards. We should not crave for more. Leave the fourth burrow intact lest we should find other than the desired treasures there."

'None cared for his advice. The moment they began to dig the fourth burrow a violent hiss shook the air. A large python emerged and rose above the mouth of the burrow. Its eyes could pour venom. It gazed at the sun and then, unwinking, at the traders, reducing them all to ashes excepting the one who had counselled otherwise.

'Ananda! Your preceptor is treading an identical course. He has been rewarded with laurel after laurel and still he is not contented. He prides upon myself being his disciple and denies my Jinahood. You would do well to go and forewarn him to spare such a course failing which I am sure to treat him as did the python to the traders. You alone will survive this severe exposure to my devastating wrath.'

Ananda was agitated. He left the workshop of Halahala, the potter, and made for the Lord. He narrated all that occurred between him and Gaushalak. He was not unaware of the Lord's powers and still the dire threat worked alongh is bone-marrow to chill him with fear. He uttered in a shaky voice:

'Sire! Can Gaushalak reduce one to ashes by his occult powers?'

'Said the Lord, 'He does have the virtue but not to reduce an *Arhat* to ashes. He can slightly expose him to his heat. You may please go Ananda and instruct all the monks to spare all discussions with Gaushalak when he is here, never remind him of the past events nor insult him.'

Ananda instructed the monks accordingly. Having performed his chores he was on his way to the Lord when Gaushalak arrived with his follower monks. Said Gaushalak the moment he arrived, 'Well Kashyapa, you may live long! You claim to have initiated me. Let me tell you that it is far from true. The one who was initiated by you is dead since long Kashyap! I have since then reincarnated seven times.

(1) In the last but six incarnations I was Udayi Kundiyan. I transmigrated from that frame to that of Aineyak and lived in that body for full twenty-two years.

(2) I vacated Aineyak's body at Chandravataran chaitya in Udandapur to haunt Mallaram's body for twenty years.

(3) I vacated Mallaram's body at Angamandir chaitya in Champa and transmigrated to Mandit's body to live in it for eighteen years.

(4) I vacated Malyamandit's body at Kammahavana in Varanasi to live in that of Roha for nineteen years.

(5) At Pattkalaya chaitya of Alabhiya I abandoned Roha's body to enter into Bharadwaja's body and lived as such for eighteen years.

(6) I haunted Arjuna's body who was Gautam's son at Kaundinyayan chaitya in Vaishali for seventeen years.

(7) At Halahala's workshop in Shravasti I occupied the present body of Gaushalaka. After completing my tenure of sixteen years into it I will be delivered of all pains.

'This Kashyapa is the chronicle of my seven incarnations during the last one hundred and twenty-three years.'

To his harangue the Lord responded thus :—

'Gaushalak! It is akin to the conduct of a thief hotly pursued. He fails to find a shelter in a tunnel, cave, citadel, hill, subterraneon region or secret spot. He will, then, deem himself to be sheltered by means of a small fibre of wool, flax or cotton although he is fully exposed. You are no other and still pretend to be different from yourself. Forsake to do so Gaushalak! It does not behave you to do so.'

Gaushalak was enraged to hear it. He vented his fury thus: 'I feel you are damned and ruined. It is almost a *fait accompli.* Let me see who rescues you from my ire. It is you who has provoked this wrath of mine.'

Gaushalak paused for a couple of moments. Sarwanubhuti,a monk, initiated by Lord Mahavira hailing from the eastern parts rose. He was a great devotee of the Lord and hence he could not resist any further. He drew nearer Gaushalak and said, 'Gaushalak! Whoever is preached by a monk or a Brahmin offers his heartfelt gratitude. Lord Mahavira has, in fact, initiated you and imparted great wisdom to you. What prompts you to be so flagrant with him? Gaushalak! Pray abstain from such an indiscretion!'

Sarwanubhuti's counsel fanned Gaushalak's fire. He exercised his fiery occult powers and lo! Sarwanubhuti was burnt to ashes in the very presence of the Lord.

Having performed this heinous crime Gaushalak resumed volleying abuses on the Lord. An ascetic Sunakshatra who hailed from Ayodhya stood up. He endeavoured to pacify him. Sunakshatra's pacific role further infuriated Gaushalak. He again focussed his fiery powers on him to consume him and reduce him to ashes.

The Lord himself then said, 'Gaushalak! I initiated and imparted wisdom to you and you give such a poor account of yourself. I advise you to shun an ignoble conduct.'

The Lord's counsel fell on deaf ears. It all the more enraged him. Gaushalak withdraw himself a few steps and concentrated hard to burn the Lord. The suddenness of the demonaic step stunned the disciples of the Lord. Smoke and flames flew high. Screams were heard all around.

The flames could not pierce the Lord's body. They were only girdling the Lord's person. It slightly singed him. The blazing power leapt up the sky and re-entered Gaushalak's body.

Said Gaushalak, 'May you live long Kashyap! You are singed by the glow of my austerities. You are sure to die in an unenlightened state within the next six months of bilious fever and burning sensation.'

Said the Lord, 'Gaushalak! I won't die within six months. I have full sixteen years to live.' While Kaushtak chaitya witnessed this dialogue the streets and highways of Shravasti were thronged with people discussing the great contest. Some said that the two *tirthankaras* were having a verbal duel. Another said, 'It's an unequal contest as Mahavira is very powerful.' Still another held that Gaushalak is equally powerful and the two being equal the outcome was impossible to predict. Each corner-meeting propounded a specific thesis. One group would favour Mahavira and another Gaushalak.

The news spread that Gaushalak had burnt two monks of Mahavira's breed by virtue of his occult powers. Some people began to shout, 'Glory be to Gaushalak!' Later occurrence was conveyed to them that Gaushalak failed to burn Mahavira and that the flames created by his wizardry reentered him causing him ennui. Now the same people shouted, 'Glory be to Mahavira.'

The masses are swayed by miracles. They can hardly appreciate *dharma.* Mahavira had a sense of attachment he would not have allowed his two disciples to be burnt alive. When the sense of attachment rose in him, he saved Gaushalak from being burnt. Vaishyayan, the austere had applied his fiery powers to Gaushalak which were quenched by Lord Mahavira by means of his mysterious cooling powers. But now Mahavira had shaken off all sense of attachment. He now lived on a spiritual plane where the differences of life and death, self and another being had little relevancy. On these empyrean heights exercising occult powers was unthinkable. His concern was with *dharma* and not with miracles.

The news of two monks being reduced to ashes by a pyromaniac caused anguish to the intellectuals. *Dharma* is after all a means to eradicate the evil of attachment. *Dharma* is another name for universal love. It breeds no enemies in its realm. When baser traits like attachment infect it, *dharma* becomes a scapegoat for factionalism and strife. Lord Mahavira remedied the evil of strife by virtue of his non-attachment and stoic tolerance of Gaushalak's powers. Gaushalak was now quiet and thought it wise to retire. The air was once more tranquillised as fast as it had been rent with discord.

The Lord reached Maindhiya, a Bihar village, from Shravasti. He stayed at Shankaushthak chaitya. He suffered from bilious fever and acute burning sensation all over the body. Blood-dysentary complicated the ailment. Hearing of it, people of all communities began to comment that Gaushalak's austerities had set at naught all the virtues of

Lord Mahavira. Probably, Gaushalak's prediction would come true and Mahavira expire within six months. It was the chief topic of discussion there. There was another chaitya called Maluyakachchha near Shankaushthak. There Lord Mahavira's disciple-monk Singha practised religious austerities. He also learnt of it. He was anguished. He left his seat where he practised austerities and entering Maluyakachchha wept bitterly.

Lord Mahavira sent for Singha through some monks as he was shaken by an apprehension of his master's imminent death. The monks did obeisance to the Lord and left for Maluyakachchha. They found monk Singha crying like a child. They consoled him and conveyed to him the Lord's desire to see him. He was quitened and regained his composure a little. He accompanied the monks to the Lord.

Said the Lord, 'Singha! My ailment breeds fear in your mind that I may die. You are afraid of Gaushalak's ominous forecast. These trepidations made you weep. Is it not so?'

'It is so my Lord.'

'Be not worried on that account. Leave all fears and know that I will be amidst you for full sixteen years.' The assurance of the Lord pleased him. His face beamed with happiness. However, the Lord's ailment was still there. He importuned the Lord to take some drug.

'The moment the right hour arrives I will be cured of all malady.'

'I pray some medicine ought to be taken.'

'Singha! You visit Rewati, the housewife. She has cooked a pumpkin for me. Pray don't accept it. She has cooked a citron for her family. Bring it for me.'

Singha called on Rewati. She showed him great courtesy and asked him the purpose of his visit. Singha conveyed to her his mission. Rewati was surprised to learn that her mind was read by somebody. It is Mahavira who had divined her mind, she was told. The Lord's wisdom is truly great, Rewati said. She gladly offered the citron dish to the monk, who carried it to the Lord. The Lord took it and all of his ailments were cured in no time. The news pleased the monks and the male and the female householders of his fold, in fact the entire world.[1]

---

1. Vide 'Bhagwatishataka' XV.

46

Nirwana (Deliverance)

Lord was as graceful without as within. His inner grace was inborn and it found its culmination by virtue of his austerities. His physical grace was a nature's gift and was perfected and perpetuated by virtue of his health. He was a paragon of fitness all his life. Only once was he required to administer drug and that also necessiated by Gaushalak causing affliction by means of his occultism. He owed his health to three factors :—

1. Abstemious regimen of diet.
2. Perfect discrimination between the body and the self.
3. Dissolution.of the mental gland of attachment or aversion.

Over-eating and psycho-physical tension cause ill-health. The Lord was free from all tensions and as a result in the pick of his health all his life.

Even during his householder's life the Lord had fully conquered the taste. His food consisted of limited quantity and limited varieties. The days of fast outnumber those of eating in his spiritual career. Exececssive fasting brought about certain bio-chemical changes in his constitution. Of course, he grew a little thin but he was fully resistant to invasions of disease. Indigenous medicine sets great store by fasting. The great ancient physician Ashwini Kumar roamed about in the guise of a yogi. He met Vagbhatta, another renowned physician. He asked the latter, 'Worthy physician! Pray name the drug that grows neither on the earth nor in the heavens and which is always health-giving, dry and endorsed by all great works.'

Replied Vagbhatta, 'Indian system of medicine commends missing meals as a great remedy. This remedy neither grows on the earth nor in the heavens. It is truly health giving, dry and endorsed by all the great works.'

If missing meal is a great Ayurvedic remedy fasting for prolonged periods is a panacea. Jain scholars have drawn a great difference between missing meals and fasting *(upwas).* 'Langhan' or missing meal has nothing to offer compared to *'upwas'* or fasting. Mere missing meals is not fasting. It literally means being in the proximity of the self where the chaste thoughtless consciousness rises. In such a state any ailment is unthinkable. Initially the Lord experimented with dry and juiceless food. The biologists believe that the body grows weak and sick on being denied its nutritional requirements. But the Lord never grew weak or sick. The escalation of his consciousness effected profound changes in his physiology. His genius attained the supreme awareness. How then could the temple of the body be lacking in health, vigour and comeliness?

Enlightenment was the culmination of his spiritual pursuit that ended his prolonged fasts. Fast is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. The moment the end was achieved no more was the means required.

Skandaka the Vedic saint came to the Lord. The Lord was taking meals each day during those days. It made his physique bright and glowing. Such glorious health begs for no external make up or adornment. He was bewitched by such a glorific health of the Lord.

Swetambaras believe that the Lord took meals even after his enlightenment while *Digambaras* believe otherwise. Who knows the truth? Both seem to toe the line of truth. Enlightenment and eating are not incompatible. Hence the *Swetambara* belief that the Lord ate is not untrue. A potent *yogi* may live without recourse to meals. Hence the *Digambara* doctrine that the Lord did without meals is also not untrue.

This was the seventy-second year of the Lord. He was perfectly healthy. From Rajgriha he went to Apapapuri. The King of the place and his subjects heard the Lord's spiritual discourse. His deliverance was imminent. He signalled Gautam and said, 'Gautam! Brahmin Deosharma resides in the neighbouring village. He required preaching. You may call on him and edify him.'

Gautam obeyed the Lord and departed.

The Lord observed fast for a couple of days. He preached constantly for two days and two nights.[1] In his last discourse he tabulated the consequences of good and evil actions.[2] In the midst of his pulpit speech he attained Nirwana. It was four *gharies** to dawn.[3]

The light was gone out of human world that granted to numberless individuals the bright glow of wisdom. The sun that emitted rays for the masses withdrew itself across the horizon.

The democracies of Malla and Lichchhavi lit lights. The moonless night of *Kartik* was brightened. The Lord attained *Nirwana* (deliverance). For an instant the entire creation experienced the lilt of ecstasy.

599 B.C. (542 before Vikram.) The Lord was born.
569 B.C. (512 before Vikram.) The Lord became a monk.
557 B.C. (500 before Vikrama) The Lord attained enlightenment.
527 B.C. (470 before Vikrama) The Lord attained *Nirwana.*

---

[1] 'Saubhagyapanchamyadi Parvakatha Sangraha leaf 100.

[2] 'Samvao' 55/4.

* 2½ Gharies = 1 Hour

[3] 'Kalpasutra' verse 147 : 'Subodhika' commentary.

47

The Tradition

Brahmin Deosharma was enlightened. Gautam was returning to the Lord, having succeeded in his mission. He was happy. He anticipated how he would report to the Lord the fulfilment of his mission. The Lord must know it intuitively and still he wanted to submit it to him. To blast his fancy the word was revealed to him that the Lord had attained deliverance.

He was numb. He was unmoved and speechless. It was a stunning blow. It was beyond his imagination that he would miss his company at this long last while he followed him like a shadow all his life. The torment of bereavement was less poignant than the idea that he could not be with him at the final moment of consummation, at the moment of *Nirwana.*

He grew maudlin, addressing the Lord, 'My Lord'! You betrayed me. Why should you have sent me on the errand to edify Deosharma when you were to leave your earthly abode? Why couldn't we do it a few days hence? Was not my love a one-sided affair? My love was not requitted. It is too plain. How long can such a love last? It was to be snapped some day. You jilted me although I was your watchdog for years and years. You were pleased to leave me thus wailing and left for your infinite journey.'

For a while he was unaware of himself and his surroundings. He regained himself and thought—I endeavour to drag the conqueror of attachment to the human plane of attachment. It were better if myself attempted to spiral up to that heavenly plane. His thinking was deflected towards the sublime heights. He was out to shake off all attachment. The direction and the path were graced by protracted pursuit and the happy conjunction won him the laurels. He attained the acme of perfect meditation. His attachment was gone. He was enlightned. What he failed to achieve during Mahavira's life-time, he achieved after his departure.

Agnibhuti, Waubhuti, Achalbhrata, Metarya and Prabhas—the five *ganadharas* had attained *nirwana* before the Lord. Vyakta, Mandit, Moryaputra and Akampit the other four *ganadharas* attained *nirwana* a few months after the Lord's departure. Indrabhuti survived the Lord by twelve and a half year and Sudharma by twenty and a half year. Both of them had lived as householders for fifty years. When the Lord attained *nirwana* they were eighty each. Gautam attained *nirwana* at 92 and Sudharma at 100.

Lord Mahavira was a *tirthankar.* He is the father of a tradition and not a part of it. A *tirthankar* does not lay a tradition either. He is nobody's disciple and makes no *tirthankar* his disciple. Hence the first *Acharya* (master) in his order happens to be Sudharma. He did not succeed the Lord. The Lord never appointed a successor. On being urged by the order Sudharma agreed to take care of it.

Gautam was the Lord's seniormost disciple. He was a rare being in all respects but immediately after the Lord's *nirwana* he attained enlightenment. Hence he did not became the *Acharya.* An enlightened being is nobody's follower. He does not profess in the name of Mahavira and his authority. His mode is to profess something on his own authority based on his own experience. Lord Mahavira came to found an order. Sudharma was best-suited to propagate the Lord's experience-oriented word. And hence the order entrusted Sudharma the task to disseminate it by being the *Acharya.*

Buddhist scriptures record that post-Mahavira period saw factions in his order vide 'Majjhimnikaya'—

'Once the Lord graced the village Samagam of Shakya state. Nigantha Nayputta (Mahavira) had died a short while ago at Pawa. His demise caused a split into his order. The subscribers were strifetorn. Each schism claimed to be the sole spokesman of the system and not the other. The latter would aver, "No. You are ignorant of *dharma*. You dwell in falsehood, while I in truth. What I preach is benign and what you do injurious. The order in which you state truth is a perverse order. Your thesis is arbitrary. It has entrapped you. Try hard to escape from its grip, if you can. Please be ridden of the malefic system you have created." Such jarring exchange was the rule of the day amongst the followers of Mahavira, then.

'The white-garbed followers of Nigantha Natputta are also as much averse to his order as they were to his alien, inept unsystematic, unenlightened disreputted, hostile and refugeless system.

'Chund Samanuddesh came to Ananda at Samagam on completing his rainy camp at Pawa. He informed Anand of the feud and faction that Mahavira's death had set in. Said Ananda to him, "Blessed Chund! Let's carry the happy news as a gift to the Lord."

'The two monks coveyed the development to Lord Buddha after paying him respects.'

Jain cononical literature does not mention this incident. Two such events took place during the life-time of Lord Mahavira. In the fifty-sixth year of the Lord his disciple Jamali had virtually caused a sohism. He had five-hundred monks with himself. Some of them stood with him while others grew hostile to him. The Buddhistic scriptures might have recorded it in this lopsided chronology.

Again, during the fifty-eighth year of the Lord polemics occurred between his disciple Gautam and Lord Parshwa's disciple Keshi. They wrangled over *dharma*, uniform and allied matters. The Buddhistic scriptures could have thus chronologically twisted the event.

48

A Bird's Eye-view of the Lord's Life

1. **The fountain of dynamism:**
   - (1) The Lord was truly Herculean.[1]
   - (2) The Lord was an epitome of self-realization. He was an adept and a genius.[2]
   - (3) The Lord mastered infinite knowledge and experience.[3]
   - (4) The Lord transcended all books and was fearless and immortal.[4]
   - (5) As does the sun, the Lord transformed all darkness into light.[5]
2. **A considered and judicious acceptance of monkhood :**
   - (6) The Lord first studied *kriyavada Akriyavada, Vinayavada* and *Agnanavada* (agnosticism) before launching upon the course leading to deliverance. Once the determination to spiritual pursuit gains ground there is no backsliding. The aspirant maintains the progress he has attained and no relapse to former state is possible. Thus the Lord

---

[1] 'Suyagado' 1/6/9.
[2] Ibid 1/6/3.
[3] Ibid 1/6/3.
[4] Ibid 1/6/5.
[5] Ibid 1/6/6.

dedicated his entire life to the cause of deliverance.[1]

3. Asceticism and meditation :

(7) The Lord devoted himself to ascetic practices to destroy the unhappy latencies accumulated in the past.[2]

(8) The Lord meditated to achieve truth.[3]

(9) The Lord fixed his gaze for meditation for hours on an end on a transverse wall.[4]

(10) The Lord used to quit inhabited places to meditate in sequestered spots.[5]

(11) The Lord meditated, adopting various postures. He made higher planes, nether planes and transverse planes of existence as the object of his meditation.[6]

4. Silence :

(12) The Lord would often spare responding to questions.[7]

(13) The Lord abstained from frequent speech. He uttered a few words, if and when necessary.[8]

(14) If somebody asked, 'Who is there inside?' he would respond, 'It is I, a monk.'[9]

5. Sleep :

(15) The Lord slept sparingly. He frequently meditated standing and even then retained full conscious-

---

1. Ibid 1/6/27.
2. Ibid 1/6/28.
3. Ibid 1/6/16.
4. 'Ayaro' 1/5.
5. Ibid 9/1/7.
6. Ibid, 9/1/14.
7. 'Ayaro' 9/1/7.
8. Ibid, 9/2/10.
9. Ibid 9/2/12.

ness. During his spiritual pursuit he had very little sleep. During twelve and a half year he slept for less than a *muhurta.*[*]

(16) When sleep would be too irresistible, he would wander a little to corquer it and thus ceaselessly stay awake.[1]

It seems unusual to do with a mere few minutes' sleep in twelve and a half year. However, it is not impossible for a Yogi. A yogi who shake's off the slumber of his consciousness, activates his subtle body and does with no sleep or very little of it. Physiological changes may also sometimes bring about such a development. Armond Jacquis Leurwait was born in 1971 in France. While two year old a heavy object fell over his head, causing a grave injury. He was taken to a hospital where he was unconscious for a number of days. Nursing revived his consciousness. The injury effected some inner bodily changes that made him an absolute insomniac. Tranquillizers were administered with no result.

Sleep is natural to life but an arousal of the quintessential consciousness and physiological changes attending thereon may render all sleep unnecessary as the reported cases testify to.

6. Food :

(1·7) The Lord was conversant with the precise quantity of food and water required for human body and consumed these accordingly.[2]

---

[*] 48 minutes.

[1] Ibid 9/2/5.

[2] Ibid, 9/2/20.

(18) The Lord was a paragon of health and still ate abstemiously. The sick are not supposed to eat wantonly. The Lord was normal but he ate sparingly.[1]

(19) The Lord was not biased towards savoury dishes.[2]

(20) The Lord experimented variously in matters of diet. Once he took dry food. He lived on fatless rice and cereals.[3]

(21) The Lord subsisted on these three kinds of food only for full eight months.[4]

(22) The Lord abandoned water also during his fasts. Once he dispensed with water for a fortnight. He even lived without water for one, two and six months.[5]

(23) We commonly believe that food and drink are utterly indispensable to biological functions. Food might be dispensed with for a few days but water is indispensable except for a short period. It was Lord Mahavira who demonstrated by doing without food and water for six months that it is within human competence to dispense with these for long durations by the dint of sheer will-power and vitality.[6]

7. Dissolution of Bodily Attachment :

(24) The Lord never took medicine whether he was fit or indisposed.[7]

(25) The Lord suffered stoically.[8]

---

1. Ibid, 9/4/1.
2. 'Ayaro', 9/1/20.
3. Ibid 9/4/4.
4. Ibid 9/4/5.
5. Ibid 9/4/5.
6. Ibid 9/4/6.
7. Ibid 9/4/1.
8. Ibid 9/3/12.

(26) The Lord moved about and lived free of all restiveness.[1]

(27) The Lord never rubbed his eyes nor scratched the itching part.[2]

(28) The Lord ever kept his arms spread out even during the winter, instead of clasping his arms across his chest.[3]

(29) While the people shivered in winter and many monks sought warm places to nestle into, protected from the chilly blasts, warming themselves with hearths indoors, the Lord meditated in the open with no clothes and no shelter.[4]

8. **Stoicism :**

(30) In the province called Laat, parish dogs often attacked the Lord. Some people warded them off while other shooed them. The monks traversing that region carried sticks to frighten the dogs, a device often found inadequate against those ferocious canines. The Lord had no stick nor any other safety device. He ambulated across the region by virtue of his rugged will.[5]

(31) People would often call him names. The Lord braved all this stoically, believing it to be purging him of his past Karmic accumulations.[6]

(32) In laat province certain people would injure the Lord with sticks, fists, lances, blades, stones and broken utensils.[7]

(33) Certain others would lacerate the Lord's body.[8]

---

[1] Ibid 9/3/1,3.

[2] Ibid 9/1/20.

[3] Ibid 9/1/22.

[4] Ibid 9/2/13-15.

[5] Ibid 9/3/3-6.

[6] 'Ayaro', 9/3/7.

[7] Ibid 9/3/10.

[8] Ibdi 9/3/11.

(34) A few would spit on him.[1]

(35) Others would throw dust on him.[2]

(36) Some people jeered him and pulled him aground.[3]

(37) The Lord sat in a meditative posture. It was a strange phenomenon to the watchers and they would forcibly change his posture. The Lord suffered all this maltreatment as if he had nothing to do with his body.[4]

9. Equanimity and Compassion :—

(38) The Lord treated earth, water, fire, air, arum, green vegetable and motes of dust as living beings and never strained them.[5]

(39) During the last two years of his householdership the Lord avoided water-bearing life. The sea of compassion began to roll in his heart.[6]

10. Spiritualism :

(40) The Lord never craved anybody's protection. Frequently, human beings and organic world tortured him. Some people volunteered to save him from such discomforts but the Lord declined such offers invariably. It was his conviction that one cannot realize oneself while one seeks another's refuge. Spiritualism allows no elbow-room for seeking another's protection. The prime feature of spiritualism is to seek shelter in one's own self.[7]

---

[1] Ibid 9/3/11.
[2] Ibid 9/3/11.
[3] Ibid 9/3/12.
[4] Ibid 9/3/12.
[5] Ibid 9/1/12.
[6] Ibid 9/1/11.
[7] Ibid 9/1/10.

(41) The Lord lived alone. His person was always covered. The Lord had already practised isolation as a householder. Spiritualism awards one the perspective and potent urge to perceive one's essential loneliness even when apparently one is in company. Such an aspirant also strives to seggregate himself. Still another characteristic of a being well-grounded in spiritual creed is *samvarana*—keeping covered. A materialist exposes his physical tendencies, senses and mind while a spiritualist keeps them covered or subjugated.[1]

(42) The Lord's philosophy was true. He was suffused with tranquillity to the core.[2]

The next characteristic of spiritualism is right vision or philosophy. The Lord witnessed all the objects, thoughts and phenomenon in the relativistic perspective. Hence truth was spontaneously available to him. Such a one is never ruffled and unhappy. The next and the fifth characteristic of spiritualism is tranquillity.

(43) The Lord was ceaselessly conscious whether during the day or during the night. Constant vigilance uncontaminated with sloth is the sixth characteristic of spiritualism. The seventh characteristic of spiritualism is *samadhi* or meditation *par excellence.*[3]

11. The basic tenets of *dharma :*

(44) The Lord attained liberation and witnessed the universe from both angles of vision—perennial

---

[1] Ibid 9/1/11.

[2] 'Ayaro', 9/1/11.

[3] Ibid 9/2/4.

and transitory and then propounded *dharma*. The basic tenets of that *dharma* are as follows.[1]

(45) Injure no creature.[2]
(46) Don't command any creature, Don't enthrall him.[3]
(47) Don't own any creature. Don't employ one as a servant.[4]
(48) Don't cause inconvenience to any creature.[5]
(49) Don't kill any creature.[6]
(50) Don't be angry.[7]
(51) Don't be avaricious.[8]
(52) Don't be afraid—not even of sickness, age and death.[9]
(53) Don't be frivolous.[10]
(54) Don't harbour evil thoughts.[11]
(55) Don't tell a lie.[12]
(56) Practise continence.[13]
(57) Aspire for deliverance—*Nirwana*.[14]
(58) Possess nothing except that which is given to you. Don't steal anything.[15]
(59) Renounce attachment. Don't acquire anything.[16]
(60) Contain your extemities, mind and senses within yourself.[17]

---

[1] 'Suyagado', 1/6/4.
[2] 'Ayaro', 4/1.
[3] Ibid 4/1.
[4] Ibid 4/1.
[5] Ibid 4/1.
[6] Ibid 4/7.
[7] Panhavagarnaiyam 7/18.
[8] Ibid 7/19.
[9] Ibid 7/20.
[10] Ibid 7/21.
[11] Ibid 6/18.
[12] 'Suyagado', 1/8/20.
[13] 'Panhavagarnaiyam' 9/3.
[14] 'Suyagado', 1/9/36.
[15] 'Suyagado', 1/8/20.
[16] Ibid 1/8/13.
[17] Ibid 1/6/17.

12. The *Nirwana* of the Lord :

The Lord purged the karmic accumulations and attained the *summum bonum* by means of knowledge, true vision and virtue. Nothing excels it in the world.[1]

---

[1] Ibid 1/6/17.

49

The Hymn

1. As *Airavat* of Indra amongst the elephants
Lion amongst the beasts,
The Ganges amongst the rivers,
Venudeo Garuda amongst the birds,
So is Mahavira superb amongst the votaries of *Nirwana.*[1]

2. As Vasudeo amongst the warriors,
Arvind lotus amongst the flowers,
Dantvakya amongst the martial races,
So is Mahavira superb amongst the sages.[2]

3. As the thunder amongst the sounds,
The moon amongst the stars,
Sandal amongst the incenses,
So is Mahavira superb amongst the monks.[3]

4. As Swayambhu amongst the oceans,
Dharmendra amongst the serpentine demi-gods,
Cane-juice amongst the juices,
So is Mahavira superb amongst the austere.[4]

5. As Nandanvana amongst the forests,
So is Mahavira superb in his knowledge and conduct.[5]

---

[1] 'Suyagado', 1/6/21 (Author is Sudharma, a companion of the Lord).
[2] Ibid 1/6/22.
[3] Ibid 1/6/19.
[4] Ibid 1/6/20.
[5] Ibid 1/6/18.

6. As asylum amongst the charities,
Ineffable word amongst the truths,
Continence amongst the observances,
So is Mahavira superb amongst the monks.[1]

7. As *Nirwan*—sponsoring-*dharma* amongst the *dharmas,*
So is Mahavira superb amongst the sages.
He is *par excellence.*[2]

8. The Lord had ridden himself of all the spiritual vices—*Wrath,* Vanity, *Maya* and avarice and he became *Arhat.* He committed no sin nor became instrumental in any act of sin.[3]

Ninka Deoputra was a devotee of Lord Mahavira. He compared Lord Mahavira with Lord Buddha in his hymn thus :

9. The wise monk who shunned sin,
Remaining covered (with moral covering) day and night.
Renouncing the object of his vision,
How could there be an iota of sin in him?[4]

10. Glory be to Lord Mahavira who knew all the species of creatures, teacher of the world, a source of happiness to the universe, Master of the universe, universal friend and the primal ancestor.[5]

11. Glory be to saint Mahavira, the source of the word, supreme *tirthankara,* the teacher of the world.[6]

12. Glory be to Lord Mahavira in whose mirror of enlightenment are reflected vividly the terrestrial and the extra-terrestrial, and whose complexion resembles the interior of a blooming lotus and burnished gold.[7]

---

[1] Ibid 1/6/23.
[2] Ibid 1/6/24.
[3] Ibid 1/6/26.
[4] 'Sanyuktanikaya', pt. I p. 65.
[5] 'Nandigatha' by Devavachaka.
[6] Ibid pt. 2
[7] 'Jayadhawala, 3 preface by Acharya Virasena.

13. Three *guptis*—of the mind, of the speech and of the body;

Five *samities* :—of the movement, of the spoken word, of the food, of the appurtenance and of the calls of nature.

Five major observances :—non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence and non-acquisition; these were the thirteen virtues that Lord Mahavira propounded, hitherto unpropounded by the preceding *tirthankaras* : We prostrate before such glorious Mahavira.[1]

14. In whose milky-ocean-like bodily aura the world has its ablution, whose enlightened knowledge inspires the world, in whose glorious world is reflected, as in a mirror, the truth. Such gods-worshipped Mahavira may grant us the path leading to the three lights mentioned herein.[2]

15. I prostrate before Mahavira who was equally well-inclined towards Indra making obeisance to him and Chandakaushik. the serpent, stinging him.[3]

16. During the perverse times of *kali* the pollen of your lotus feet is like a lamp to the pathless, nocturnal wanderer, an island to the breathless, oceanic drifter, a shadowy tree to a scorched being in a desert in June and fire to a shivering being.[4]

17. My Lord! So long as I had not seen your Holiness, I drifted hither and thither for aeons. I thank this perverse *kalikala* when I was blessed with your vision.[5]

18. Two contradictions are witnessed in your holy being superb *nirgranthata* and superb universal sway.[6]

---

[1] 'Charitra Bhakti' verse 7 by Acharya Pujyapada.

[2] 'Tatvanushasaṇa' Prashasti verse 259 by Acharya Ramsena.

[3] Yogashastra 1/2 by Acharya Nemchandra.

[4] Vitaragastava 9/6.

[5] Ibid 9/7.

[6] Ibid 10/6.

19. Strange is your might O Lord! Strange is your appearance. Strange is your grace towards all creatures. You are the supreme master of these rare virtues. We make obeisance to you.[1]

20. Lord! You are an uninvoked saviour, motiveless compassionate being, a well-wisher even when unprayed, friend even when unrelated.[2]

21. My Lord! Others have fallen back in showing compassion to their benefactors as you have shown compassion even to your malefactors. All this is unparalleled.[3]

22. I am alone. None belongs to me. I belong to no one. But since I have found refuge in your holy feet, there is no trace of inferiority in me.[4]

23. It is hardly feasible that I stay in your kind heart. If you condescend to grace my heart with your presence, I will be blessed.[5]

24. Free of all attachment! Abiding by your commandment is preforable to worshipping you. Obeying your commandment conduces to deliverance and its contravention to bondage. It is your perennial command to be discreet about the propriety and impropriety of conduct. *Asrava,* that which leads to bondage, is improper and *samvara* that which leads to deliverance is proper.[6]

25. Wherein the principle is emphasised and the unimportant ignored, such is your logical system, coming home to everybody. The non-relative is inconclusive. Such be the *tirtha* established by you that protects one from all disasters and brings about a universal welfare.[7]

---

[1] 'Vitaragastava', 10/8.
[2] Ibid 13/1.
[3] Ibid 14/5.
[4] Ibid 17/7.
[5] Ibid 19/1.
[6] Ibid 19/4.
[7] 'Yuktyanushasana' 61 by Acharya Samantbhadra.

26. Mahavira is no brother to me nor Kanada etc. foes. Never did I come across any of them. However, Mahavira's virtuous preachings have enthrilled us and drawn us to his shelter.[1]

27. *Tirthankar* was not our father nor Kanada etc. our foes. *Tirthankar* never gifted us with gold nor Kanada robbed us. But Mahavira is absolutely beneficial to the world and his chaste word redeems all evil. Hence subscribe to his faith.[2]

28. I am not biased in favour of Mahavira, nor averse to Kapila etc. I am committed to the preaching that is truly rational.[3]

29. Lord Mahavira! Your word sometimes supports the providence, at other times calls events as spontaneously occurring or ascribes destiny to the temporal factors. At times you hold the deeds of the individuals as the mould of their desert, at other times find another's deeds project their moral reflection on the individual. The miracle is that none blames you for these paradoxical utterances![4]

30. As all the rivers pour themselves into the ocean, so all the views pour themselves into your philosophy. But these views don't reflect you as the rivers fail to reflect the ocean.[5]

31. You were freed of the world by following the doctrine that it is the self that generates the world, merges into it and frees itself of the world.[6]

32. At any time, in any form and accepted name, if one is shorn of all attachment, that one is you alone. My

---

[1] 'Loktatvanirnaya 32 by Acharya Haribhadra.

[2] Ibid 33.

[3] Ibid 38.

[4] 'Dwatrinshika' 3/8 by Siddhasena Diwakar.

[5] 'Dwatrinshika' 4/15.

[6] Ibid 4/26.

Lord! You are one although variously appearing. My obeisance to you.[1]

33. I am not prejudiced in your favour because of my devotion to you. I don't oppose others because of any antagonism towards them. I have tested the authenticity of each view and on its strength dedicated myself to your honour, O Lord![2]

34. Let that rain-laden cloud grant lasting peace to the seekers of truth which does not reflect any lightning nor drift about in the sky. This cloud does not affirm its glory by thunderous sound, nor beg any alms to soil its palm.[3]

35. While speaking he is a *syadvadi,* in faith he subscribes to relativism, in ethics he insists on virtuous conduct. He is a sage and a meditative genius, an adept in preaching, Herculean in deeds and austere. Multifarious are his forms. Such Lord Vardhman be my refuge.[4]

36. My Lord! I am your devotee. But since you are invisible how shall I grasp your *syadvada* unless you appear to me?[5]

37. Let my eyes stare at your face, my hands engage themselves in your worship and my ears forever hear your praise.[6]

38. Choked is my tongue and still its temptation to sing your praise augurs well. No other tongue do I desire.[7]

39. I am your servant, vassal, slave. Pray, accept me as such. Nothing else do I entreat you for.[8]

---

1. 'Ayogavyavachchheda Dwatrinshika 29 by Acharya Hemchandra.
2. Ibid 31.
3. 'Jain Siddhantadeepika' Prashasti verse 2 by Acharya Tulsi.
4. 'Vitaragastaka' 4 by Muni Nathmal.
5. Ibid 4.
6. Ibid 20/6.
7. Ibid 20/7.
8. Ibid 20/8.

40. Lord! In praying to you I violate the restraint of the tongue *(Vachangupti)* in remembering you I violate the restraint of the mind *(managupti)* in prostrating to you I violate the restraint of the body. *(kayagupti)*. Be it as it may, I vow to ever pray you, remember you and prostrate before you.[1]

---

1. 'Mahapuran'76/2 by Acharya Jinsena.

ANNEXURE—I

The difference of traditions

The differences of biographical events in *Digambar* and *Swetambar* traditions are as under :—

	Swetambar :	**Digambar :**
1.	Lord Mahavira's mother Trishala was Chetaka's sister.	Lord Mahavira's mother Trishala was Chetaka's daughter.
2.	Prince Mahavira was wedded to Yashoda, daughter of the feudal chief Samarvira of the town of Vasantpur. The author of the present work has accepted Yashoda as Jitshatru's daughter.	The matrimonial proposal of king Jitashatru of Kalinga's daughter Yashoda was offered but was declined.
3.	The parents of the Lord had died before he was initiated.	The parents of the Lord lived when he was initiated.
4.	The maiden preaching of the Lord was held at Madhyam Pawapuri on the 11th day of *Vaishakh shukla.*	The maiden preaching was held on the first day of *Sravana Krishna,* at Vipul-achala mountain.
5.	Lord Mahavira preached orally.	Lord Mahavira preached by means of divine voice.
6.	Lord Mahavira took meals after attaining enlightenment.	Lord Mahavira ceased to take meals when he had attained enlightenment.
7.	Sudharma took over as the first *Acharya* after the Lord attained *Nirwana.*	Gautam took over as the first acharya after the Lord attained *Nirwana.*

ANNEXURE—II

The four-month-long annual rainy camps.

Lord Mahavira camped forty-two times in the rainy seasonal camps. The first twelve were had in pre-enlightenment period and the rest thirty in the enlightened state :—

1. Asthigram.
2. Nalanda.
3. Champa.
4. Prishthachampa.
5. Bhaddiyanagar.
6. Bhaddiyanagar.
7. Alammiya.
8. Rajgriha.
9. Vajrabhumi.
10. Shravasti.
11. Vaishali.
12. Champa.
13. Rajgriha.
14. Vaishali.
15. Wanijyagram.
16. Rajgriha.
17. Wanijyagram.
18. Rajgriha.
19. Rajgriha.
20. Vaishali.
21. Wanijyagram.
22. Rajgriha.
23. Wanijyagram.
24. Rajgriha.
25. Mithila.
26. Mithila.
27. Mithila.
28. Wanijyagram.
29. Rajgriha.
30. Wanijyagram.
31. Vaishali.
32. Vaishali.
33. Rajgriha.
34. Nalanda.
35. Vaishali.
36. Mithila.
37. Rajgriha.
38. Nalanda.
39. Mithila.
40. Mithila.
41. Rajgriha.
42. Pawa.

Rajgriha — 11 camps.
Vaisali — 6 camps.
Mithila — 6 camps.
Wanijyagram — 6 camps.
Nalanda — 3 camps.
Champa — 2 camps.
Bhaddiyanagar — 2 camps.

In rest of the six places one rainy-seasonal camp each.

ANNEXURE—III

Other sojourns

First year :—	Kundgram. Gnatakhandvana. Karmargram. Kollag Sannivesha. Morak Sannivesha. Duijjantag Ashram. Asthikgram.
Second year :—	Morak Sannivesha. South Vachala. Kanakhal Ashrampad. North Vachala. Shvetambi. Surabhipur. Thunak Sannivesha. Nalanda.
Third Year :—,	Kollag Sannivesha. Suwarnakhal. Brahmingram. Champa.
Fourth Year :—	Kallaya Sannivesha. Pattakalaya. Kumarak Sannivesha. Chaurak Sannivesha. Prishthachampa.
Fifth Year :—	Kayangala Sannivesha. Shravasti. Kaddukagram. Nanglagram (Vasudeo temple) Avarta (Baldeo temple) Chaurak, Sannivesha. Kalambuka Sannivesha.

Ladh Desha.
Purnakalashgram.
Bhaddiyanagari.

Sixth Year :—
Kadali Samagam.
Jambusanda.
Tambaya sannivesha.
Kupiya Sannivesha.
Vaishali (Kammarshala)
Gramak Sannivesha (Vimalak Yaksha temple)
Shalishirsha.
Bhaddyia Nagari.

Seventh Year :—
Various regions of Magadha.
Alammiya.

Eighth Year :—
Kundak Sannivesha (Vasudeo Temple)
Bhaddanna Sannivesha (Baldeo Temple).
Bahusalagagram (Shalvana grove)
Lohargala.
Purimtala (Shakatnnkha grove)
Unnaga.
Gobhumi.
Rajgriha.

Ninth Year :—
Ladh (Radh) Desh
Vajrabhumi
Sumhabhumi.

Tenth Year :—
Siddharthapur.
Karmagram.
Siddharthapur
Vaishali.
Wanijyagram.
Shravasti.

Eleventh Year :—

Sanulatthiya Sannivesha.
Dridhabhumi.
Pedhalgram (Poulas chaitya)
Baluka.
Suyoga.
Suchchheta.
Malaya.
Hastishirsha.
Tonsligram.
Mosli.
Siddharthpur.
Vajragram.
Alammiya.
Seyaviya.
Shravasti.
Kaushambi.
Varanasi.
Rajgriha.
Mithila.
Vaishali (Baldeo temple of summer garden).

Twelfth Year :—

Sumsumarpur.
Bhogpur.
Nandgram.
Mendhiyagram.

Kaushambi.
Sumangala.
Suchchheta.
Palak.
Champa (Place of sacrifices, *Yagna*).

Thirteenth Year :—

Jambhiyagram.
Mendhiyagram.
Chhammni.

Madhym Pawa.
Jambhiyagram.
Rajgriha.

Fourteenth Year :—
Brahmakurdal grampur.
(Bahushal's chaitya).
Videha Janapada.
Vaishali.

Fifteenth Year :—
Vatsabhumi.
Kaushambi.
Kaushal Janapada.
Shravasti.
Videha Janapada.
Wanijyagram.

Sixteenth Year :—
Magadha Janapada.
Rajgriha.

Seventeenth Year :—
Champa.
Videha Janapada.
Wanijyagram.

Eighteenth Year :—
Banaras.
Alabhika.
Rajgriha.

Nineteenth Year :—
Magadha Janapada.
Rajgriha.

Twentieth Year :—
Vatsa Janapada.
Alammiya.
Kaushambi.
Videha Janapada.
Vaishali.

Twenty-first Year :—
Kakandi.
Sharavasti.
Ahichchhatra.
Rajpur.

	Kampilya. Poulaspur. Wanijyagram.
Twentysecond Year :—	Magadha Janapada. Rajgripha.
Twenty-third Year :—	Kachangala. Shravasti. Wanijyagram.
Twenty-fourth Year :—	Brahminkundgram (Bahushal chaitya). Vatsa Janapada. Magadha Janapada. Rajgriha.
Twenty-fifth Year :—	Champa. Mithila. Kakandi. Mithila.
Twenty-sixth Year :—	Anga Janapada. Champa. Mithila.
Twenty-seventh Year :—	Vaishali. Shravasti. Mandhiyagram (Salkaushthak chaitya).
Twenty-eighth Year :—	Kaushal-Panchal. Shravasti. Ahichhatra. Hastinapur. Mokanagari. Wanijyagram.
Twenty-ninth Year :—	Rajgriha.

Thirteeth Year :—	Champa. Prishthachampa. Videha. Wanijyagram.
Thirty-first Year :—	Kaushal-Panchal. Saket. Shravasti. Kampilya. Vaishali.
Thirty-second Year :—	Videha Janapada. Kaushal Janapada. Kashi Janapada. Wanijyagram. Vaishali.
Thirty-third Year :—	Magadha. Rajgriha. Champa. Prishtha champa. Rajgriha.
Thirty-fourth Year :—	Rajgriha (Gunashila chaitya.) Nalanda.
Thirty-fifth Year :—	Videha Janapada. Wanijyagram. Kaullag region. Vaishali.
Thirty-six Year :—	Kaushal Janapada. Panchal Janapada. Sursena Janapada. Saket. Kampilyapur. Sauryapur. Mathura. Nandipur.

Videha Janapada.
Mithila.

Thirty-seventh Year :— Magadha Janapada.
Rajgriha.

Thirty-eight Year :— Magadha Janapada.
Rajgriha.
Nalanda.

Thirty-ninth Year :— Videha Janapada.
Mithila.

Fortieth Year :— Videha Janapada.
Mithila.

Forty-first Year :— Magadha Janapada.
Rajgriha.

Forty-second Year :— Rajgriha.
Pawa.

~~5318~~
10318